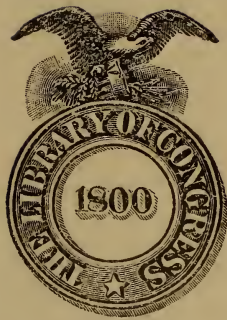


HADEN
WILSON:



MISSIONARY.

P. H. Wilkerson

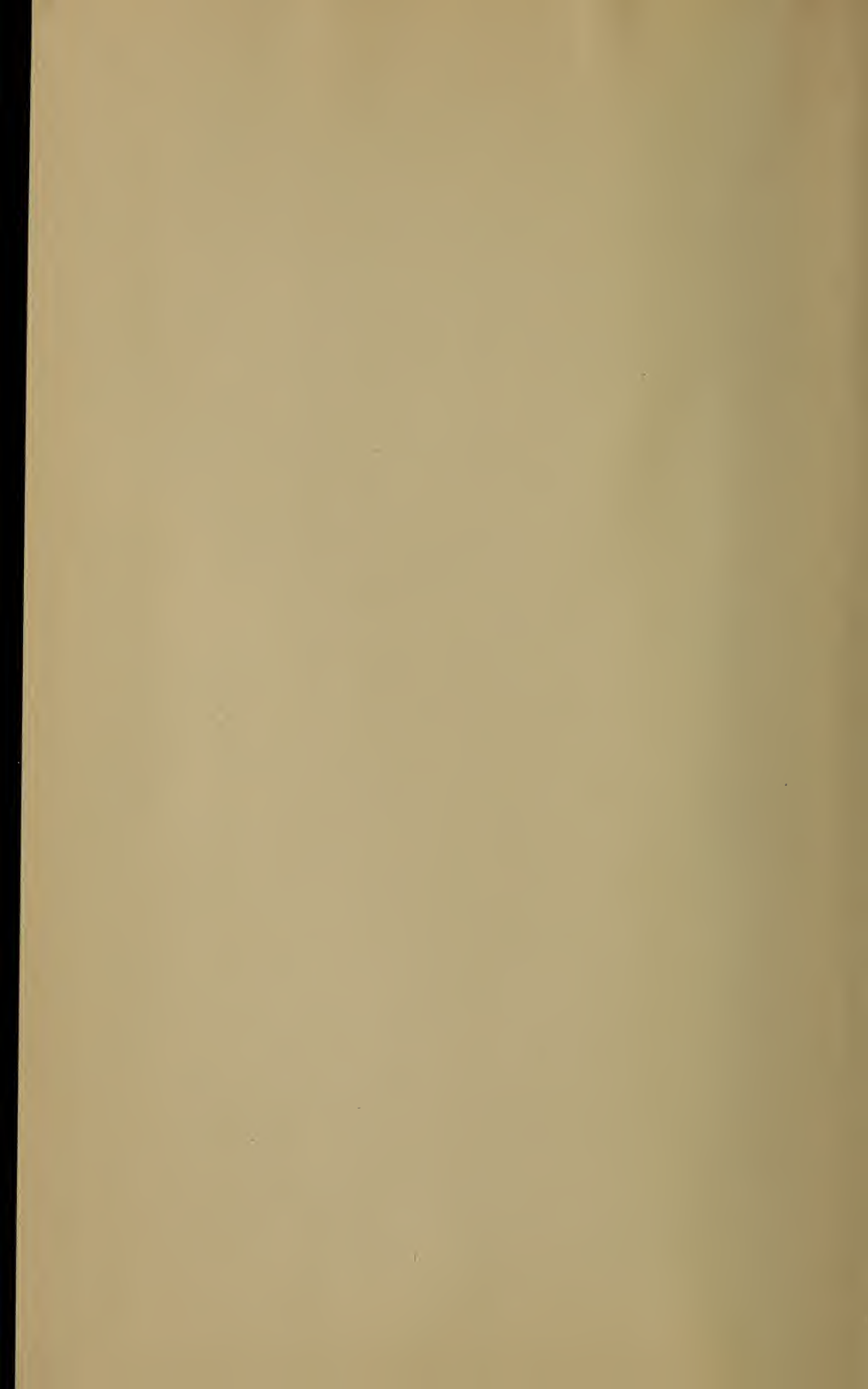


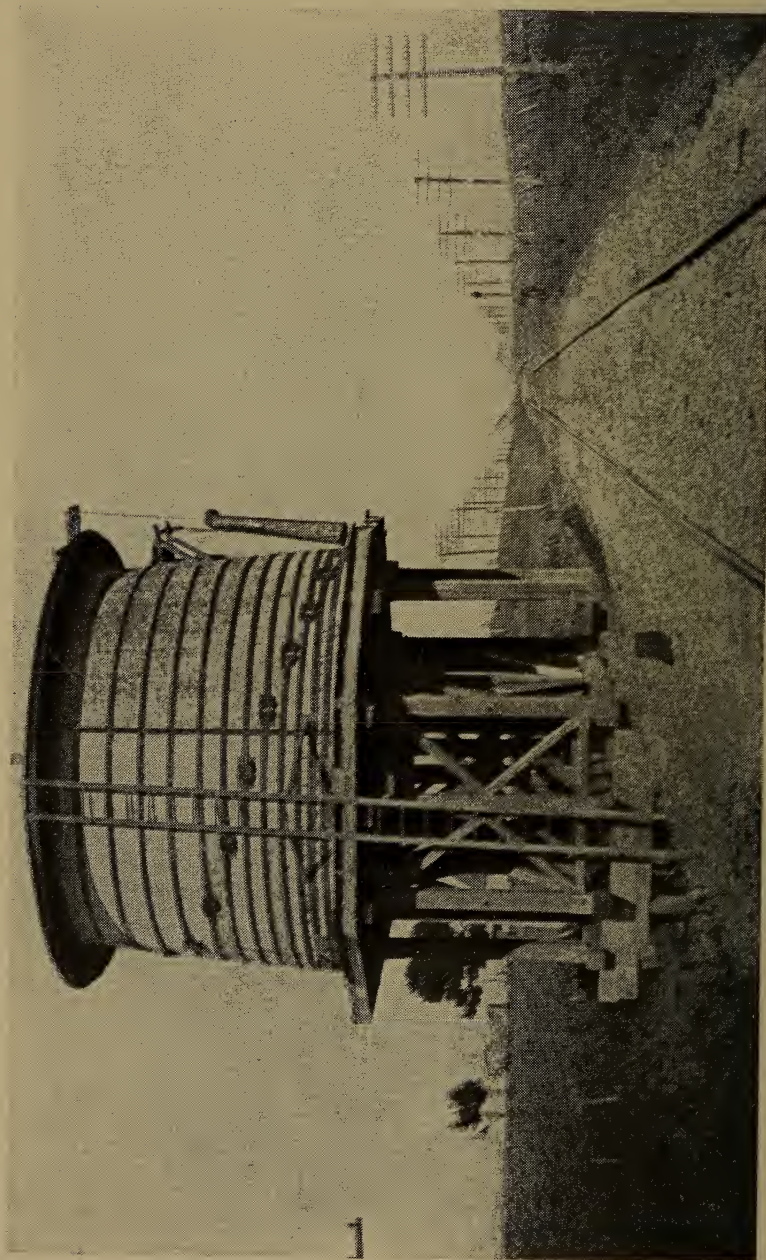
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THE TANK AND SIDING

HADEN WILSON: MISSIONARY

*A Narrative of Real Adventures,
True to Frontier Life ; the Names of
Persons and Places Only Fictitious*

By
P. H. WILKERSON



PHILADELPHIA

American Sunday-School Union

1816 CHESTNUT STREET

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Preface

EARLY in the twentieth century a Sunday-school missionary in Arkansas gave an impressive address based on his personal experiences in that state and in the Indian Territory, which is now a part of the state of Oklahoma. His forcible statements, thrilling incidents and graphic description of the great work of the American Sunday-School Union in neglected rural communities so impressed a young man in the audience that he resolved to offer himself as a Sunday-school missionary. Through the speaker, the Rev. Charles W. Burks, he made application for a commission and two years later the way was opened for the young man to enter the Sunday-school mission work.

That young man's experience furnishes the framework for this story. A large portion of what is narrated as growing out of Haden Wilson's first visit to the Modoc country is in reality a personal experience in a similar region once known as the Cherokee Nation. The description of early life in the Indian Territory, the intellectual and religious destitution which

existed among the white settlers and the reckless characters who openly defied the law and showed a vicious disregard for the claims of society are not in any way exaggerated.

This story is not only true to life; but it represents real facts and real characters (but not their real names) in the person of Haden Wilson, Mike Masters and his father, Harry Keith, Clarence Bush, Mrs. Holmes and others, and portrays a religious destitution that was real in communities where the missionary lived. That young man's adventures are also substantially types of the experience and efforts of more than a score of other faithful Sunday-school missionaries laboring in the regions of the Southwest. If it shall increase the interest, stir the sympathies and stimulate the readers heartily to support this work, the purpose and sincere desire of the author will be amply realized.

P. H. WILKERSON.

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Haden Wilson: Missionary

CHAPTER I

FIRST VISIT TO MODOC

ON a hot day in August, Haden Wilson alighted from a freight train in the neighborhood of Modoc, Oklahoma. There was no depot where the train stopped; only a water tank and siding. The engine pulling a local freight stopped to take water, and also to let the passenger off. For the lack of more passenger trains, the conductor on this local freight was allowed to carry travelers. Young Wilson had arranged that the "tank" was to be his destination. The conductor got off the caboose with his passenger, and the two men engaged in conversation while the engine took on its required supply of water. At the sound of the whistle they shook hands, and the conductor swung aboard his train as it pulled out to the south.

A box car rested on the siding and by it stood a wagon and team. The wagon was loaded with prairie hay, and two men were engaged in transferring the hay from the wagon to the box car.

The strange young man—for this was Haden Wilson's first visit to Modoc—after seeking the shade of the tank, sent a searching glance across the prairie to the west. Attracted by the sound of the men unloading the hay, he left the shade and walked to the box car. Before he reached it, they stopped work and stood watching the stranger with an expression on their faces which, if interpreted, would have said, "Who are you, and what is your business here?"

It was not unusual for strangers to appear in the neighborhood of Modoc, but they were generally whiskey peddlers, or United States officers; either were always interesting to the two men working at the hay.

Young Wilson greeted the men in a frank and courteous manner. The tone of voice and the free and easy manner of the young man were good evidence, in the judgment of the men, that the visitor was neither a bootlegger nor an officer of the law. The men returned the friendly greeting, and the reserve common between strangers was swept away. Inquiry was made as to the distance and direction to the

store and post-office. "Two miles west," responded the elder of the two men, with a slight ring of the Irish brogue in his voice.

The names of the merchant, doctor and several farmers were as readily given by the same one in response to the young man's request. All of which names were written down in a blank book by the inquirer.

"Is the schoolhouse near the store?" the stranger asked.

"Yes, only three hundred yards north," answered the elder of the two men again.

It was eleven o'clock, and the rays of the August sun were sizzling hot, but the young man seemed to take no note of the intense heat as he picked up his grip and started toward the store. After going a short distance he turned and came back to the men, who were still trying, in their minds, to reach a satisfactory solution of the stranger's business.

"Is there a Sunday-school in the schoolhouse?" he inquired.

The question puzzled the two men still more, and Mike Masters—that was the name of the elder of the two men—exclaimed, "Man, no!" with strong emphasis on the first word.

"If you are looking for Sunday-school people," continued Mike, emphasizing the word people, "you need not stop in these parts."

The statement opened the way for further conversation by which young Wilson learned that there were about sixty children of school age in the neighborhood, and a large number of young people, whose ages ranged from seventeen to twenty-five ; and that since Mike could remember, there had not been a Sunday-school and very little preaching.

"Do you know any one in the community who might become interested in a Sunday-school ?" asked the stranger.

"No one," with a searching look at his inquisitor.

"Would you not like to have a Sunday-school ?" asked the young man, walking closer to Mike.

"I think it would be a good thing for the children ; but, man, we haven't any one about Modoc to run it. It takes people who read the Bible, sing good songs and pray, to run a Sunday-school, and there's no one here who works in that kind of harness."

Following this young Wilson explained that he was a Sunday-school missionary, and also the purpose of his visit to Modoc.

"Say, mister, if you are a religious man you will sure get lonesome in this country, if you are looking for that brand of people to run with. The boys may make it lively for you."

At the conclusion of this speech the missionary picked up his suit case and again started toward the store.

"Say, Mr. Wilson, since you are going to stop anyway, if you will wait a few minutes you are welcome to ride to the store. You will find it warm enough over there without heating yourself up by walking. Harry Keith is a terror to all who say they believe the Bible. And the boys—they are sure to be drunk when there's preaching, and what they do is a plenty, I'll tell you."

The missionary decided to accept Mike's kind offer and sought the shade of the car while the men unloaded the big bales of hay. All conversation ceased; but Mike and his companion were busy contemplating the results of the young man's visit. Both felt that they knew how it would terminate, and a chuckle escaped the lips of Mike.

Young Wilson was also busy. His past experience with men, and especially since he had become a missionary, led him to believe that Mike was a character, and one of the first things for him to do was to make of him a friend.

"All right, Mr. Wilson, we are ready," called out Mike.

Young Wilson stepped from the shady side

of the car, and with a vigorous swing of the right arm tossed his suit case to a secure place on the hay frame and followed it with a spring that landed him by the side of Mike, who watched his movements with a marked degree of interest.

“You say your name is Wilson?”

“Yes, Haden Wilson.”

“I have a friend named Tom Wilson, but I guess you don’t know him. He’s not your kind of people.”

“I know a Tom Wilson over in the Spavinaw Mountains.”

“It may be the same old Tom. You may be of kin. Are you?” said Mike, with emphasis on “you.” Without waiting for an answer Mike continued: “I first met Tom twenty-four years ago in the seminary at Tahlequah. His home was on Coyote Creek, in the hill country. His father was a white man, but he killed some men over in Georgia, and when they threatened to enforce the law, he came to the Cherokee country and married old man Hawkeye’s daughter. Hawkeye was half Cherokee. Coyote Creek is a fine valley country with mountains on both sides; a good place to hide, as well as to hunt. Tom grew up in them hills and mountains—a mean devil! His father sent him to Tahlequah, but he never took to study,

and he objected to the requirements of the school. Sometimes he would run away and return to the mountains to live with the Indians. But his father would bring him back. After two years' trial he was allowed to remain at home."

The team was driven by Mike's companion ; and with a vigorous application of the whip it moved off at a lively rate, but the driver was interested in what passed between Mike and the stranger and soon forgot to apply the "persuader," as he called it. The horses took notice of the apathy of the driver and settled to a poky walk.

"Tom and I are not related," said the Sunday-school man, "but I know him. I first met him near two years ago."

"Was you in them hills with a grip like that?" asked Mike quickly. "Something has come over Tom. Years ago you would not have been safe. Then, if you had showed up with a thing like that without red liquor, you would have been taken for a government officer; and I'll tell you, young man, you would have to answer mighty straight if you got out all right. Was you in them hills alone? Nine years ago I lived in that valley, and Tom and me took in the country when we felt like it. I tell you it was tough. It was not safe then for

a fellow like you to be roaming around. I've not heard from Tom in several years. How was he getting along when you saw him? The last time I heard of the rascal there was war on between him and Jake Jones. They were trying to settle some trouble with Winchesters. Where did you meet Tom?"

The mention of Mike's old friend brought back the past and he plunged into its review, not appearing to note that he had asked questions which required answers.

The missionary was willing to let him talk. In that way he would get a clue to the man he wanted to know more about, so he did not attempt to interrupt him by answering. But after Mike asked the last question, he paused as if expecting an answer.

"I met him out in the mountains northwest of the valley."

"Great Scott! man, what was a Sunday-school worker doing in that country? Nobody but outlaws, moonshiners and revenue officers go into such a devil's den as the Spavinaw Mountains," ejaculated Mike, as he gave the young man a searching look.

"In October of that year," said the missionary, "I was asked to visit the Coyote Creek valley and see if I could not organize a Sunday-school. After securing the names of several

people who lived there, I started from Fayetteville, Arkansas, early on Thursday morning to make the trip by noon the next day. When I stopped that night I found that I was fifteen miles from the valley. The next morning was cloudy, and a chilly wind was blowing from the north; but I set out soon after daylight to make the fifteen miles. The road was rough, and my ponies were forced to go slowly. I soon reached the deep gorges in the mountains. Everything I could see looked lonely, and I felt as my surroundings appeared. My courage was kept up, however, by the expectation that I would soon come out of the gloomy scenes into the valley of Coyote Creek. Hours passed and the hills, or mountains, appeared to get higher, and the space between them much narrower. The way continued to grow rougher and more gloomy, and I began to think I had taken the wrong road, when I reached the most desolate part. However, as I pressed on, I saw ahead of me a board fastened to a tree. Here I felt sure was the friendly guide-post and, urging my ponies forward, I drove up to read its directions. On the board in big, black letters were the words, 'Just Five Miles To H-ll.' "

"Thunder! mister, you was eight miles from the valley," roared Mike, with a vigor that caused the little old bony team to move into a

livelier trot, "and just five miles from where old Shanks' wildcat-still used to be. That thing stirred up more hellishness in them mountains than has ever been found in any other place on the earth. Jake Jones and I nailed that very board on that tree the day after Sam Jesup and Hal West killed each other. We swore that we would shoot the one who tore it down, and I guess it is there to this day. Both men had good wives. On that day they went to the still, good friends, got drunk on old Shanks' moonshine whiskey and rounded up by killing each other. As we stood around their graves and heard their weeping wives and the cries of their helpless children, I felt like rising up and stamping out the whole infernal business. The next day after we buried them, Jake and me walked up the valley and nailed that board where you saw it, as a warning to all who did not want to go to hell."

Here Mike paused as if in deep agony over the past.

"I tell you, Mr. Wilson, I have sold many a gallon and drunk more of the cursed stuff, and I know it is hell."

This utterance of Mike was with such force that the little old bony team moved out again, evidently thinking that the whole demonstration was for it.

Wilson saw that he had made a discovery that would add interest to his experience, and remained silent, hoping that his companion would continue.

"I told the revenue officers if they wanted to find the place where most of them would go after Uncle Sam got through with them, to follow the directions of that sign-board. The old 'devil,' Shanks, and his son were killed, and his plant burned. I left when that raid was made, but some of the gang stayed. Tom Wilson was one of them. But I don't know how it is now. How was it when you was there?"

Mike paused after asking this question.

"It is not so bad now," said young Wilson.

"How did you get out of that country alive?"

"When I saw that sign I stopped. I had already gone as close to that country as I wanted to get. In fact, I was not hunting that place." At this statement Mike and the driver laughed.

"You was not traveling on that road," said Mike, continuing to laugh.

"No, sir. I turned my ponies' heads at once in the other direction and started back down the narrow valley. As soon as I felt that I was out of danger, I stopped, knowing that I was lost. After a little while I concluded to hallo; so I gave a big 'whoo-ee,' hoping that I might attract the attention of some one."

“By the eternals, man, that was a dangerous thing to do! Them hills might have been full of men looking for bootleggers or officers. If they had found you, it is dead sure you would not be taking this ride with us to-day.”

This last statement served to send the little old bony team into a lively trot again.

“Yes, so I thought that day. After giving that big whoop, in a very short time, three voices answered back. I soon heard them again. I was almost sure that I was about to fall into the hands of outlaws. They continued to hallo; one down the valley in the direction I was going. After reflecting a short time as to what to do I concluded that I would stop, and answered back in a good strong voice. I did not have to wait long, for in a few minutes I saw a man looking in every way like an outlaw, as I had such characters pictured in my mind. He appeared to be very tall, much more than six feet, and carried a Winchester in both hands, ready to shoot at the slightest warning. I sat in my buggy and held the ponies, but they were very impatient, and I thought scented danger.’ By the time he approached the buggy, another, looking equally dangerous, came into view from the other side. The first man demanded with an oath why I did not come yesterday. I explained that I did not know that

I was expected on that day, but he insisted that I did. Pretty soon two more came up, both with Winchesters. Their greeting was something similar to that of the first men, and I continued to protest that I did not know I was expected yesterday. All came close up, and the first one to address me walked to the rear of the buggy, lifted the cover and ran his hand inside. He brought out a twenty-five cent Bible, a large number of which I was carrying with me. When he held up that Bible for his companions to inspect—the surprise that came to the face of each I shall never forget. At first they looked like they would run away. Pretty soon, however, the one who held the book gained his self-control, gave a long, keen whistle, and then broke into a laugh in which the others joined.

“‘Say, mister, who are you, and what do you expect to do with these things?’ said the leader, who by this time had made a further examination of the buggy, bringing out other Bibles and passing one to each of his companions.

“I told them my name.

“‘You must not be the man we are looking for just now. But you may be one of them cursed revenue officers,’ continued the leader.

“At this suggestion a vicious look came into

the face of each one. Throwing the Bibles to the ground they stepped back from the buggy, holding their Winchesters in a most threatening position.

“‘I say, mister,’ demanded the man to my left, ‘who are you? We’re not going to be fooled with this time. If you are one of them cursed officers, pretending to be a Bible man, your days are up. It is the last time you will slip into these woods and pry into our business.’”

“They looked desperate, and some explanation was necessary. I held up my hands and told the men to come and search me.

“At this the one at my left said, ‘Pull him out, Tom, and see what he’s got.’”

“I’ll bet these horses and wagon that that was Tom Wilson,” exclaimed Mike.

This statement was accompanied with a greater demonstration than any of Mike’s previous performances, which caused the little old bony horses to lunge forward, nearly sending the missionary and Mike sprawling on the ground. Mike avenged this breach on the part of the horses by vigorously cursing each.

“That long six-footer who came around the bend, I’ll bet Bill and Kate (those were the names of the horses) was Tom—the same old Tom Wilson I used to tramp with over the hills and mountains looking for bootleggers, marshals

and revenue officers. I'll tell you, Mr. Wilson, if that Tom had ever pulled the trigger of his Winchester on you I'm sure we wouldn't have the pleasure of your company to-day. How did you and them rascals settle it? You must be a slick duck to explain to that gang. Yes, sir, you must be a good one to be here to-day. How did you do it?"

Mike paused; this gave the missionary a chance to proceed.

"I told them frankly who I was, and my mission to that country. They laughed and made sport of my purpose, but I was firm and asked them about several people whose names I had secured. One of the parties I inquired about was Tom Wilson, the six-footer. When I called his name the gang forgot its murderous purpose of a few minutes before in an outburst of laughter, and when I told them I had selected Tom Wilson's name from the list as a person probably suitable for superintendent of the Sunday-school I expected to organize I gained a point. Of course they laughed at the idea, but understood my ignorance of the real condition. I told them I would hold a service at their little schoolhouse the following night and another on Sunday, and expressed the hope that each one would be present. I asked Tom to get into the buggy with me, as I had to

spend the night somewhere, and would as soon stay with him as any one in the valley. None of the men would go with me, but I insisted that I was going to Tom's house. Tom objected by saying he was not fixed to keep strangers. He tried to bluff me by saying that he had eleven children at home. But he told me how to go and I drove down the little narrow valley. I knew I was watched, so I took my time, stopped at the first house I came to and explained my mission to a poor, tired woman with a number of children, a Mrs. West."

"That's Hal's widow, I'll bet this wagon," broke in Mike with great emphasis.

"When I told her what I was there for, she burst into tears and said she wished I had come long ago. I found the little schoolhouse, called on a few other families and finally drove up to Tom Wilson's and told his wife I wanted to stay all night. Tom soon rounded in, satisfied that I was neither a bootlegger nor an officer. I spent the next day in the valley, meeting as many people as I could, and arranging to make the little old schoolhouse comfortable. To make a long story short," said the missionary, for he saw they were near the store, "I spent ten days in the valley and organized a little Sunday-school. I preached each night and visited the people during the day. Some

months later I returned and held a meeting in which a number were converted. A church was organized. Tom Wilson is an officer in it and superintendent of the Sunday-school. A painted church house stands in the valley near the banks of that beautiful little creek, and the people are called together each Sunday morning by the church bell. The blind tiger and boot-legger find it hard to do business in that country now. The people have learned that a Sunday-school and a church are much better."

The wagon had stopped in front of the store, but Mike appeared to be oblivious of all about him. What the missionary had said about the change in Coyote Creek valley brought to his mind visions that had long been marred by a vicious and dissipated life.

CHAPTER II

A FATHER'S FOLLY

MIKE'S father was an Irishman. While a young man his adventurous spirit carried him into the Indian country. After remaining there some time he married a Cherokee girl whose father was a white man. The elder Masters, after making some investigation as to a suitable section in which to locate, chose the western part of the nation, and was the first farmer to demonstrate the fact that that country was suitable for growing grain in addition to its advantages for grazing.

Mike's father lived a reckless life, although he was a successful farmer and stockman. He soon laid claim to a large portion of the land about him ; and was never more in his proper element than when in a dispute with some other claimant over boundary lines, or unbranded cattle. It is reported that for a number of years, during the latter part of the existence of the courts of the tribal government, and also after the United States superseded that government by substituting its own courts, the elder Masters' name

seldom failed to appear on the dockets, both civil and criminal, at each term of these courts.

He was not content to let the law settle all matters of dispute. A difference with him meant a challenge to physical combat wherever he encountered his enemies. This was especially true when he was under the influence of liquor, and that was always his condition when he was where whiskey could be had. As a result of that temperament the elder Mike Masters bore to his grave many marks of sanguinary conflicts. From the earliest recollection of the eldest son, Mike Jr., it was his father's protracted drunks, ungovernable rage, and frequent returns home, half dead, maimed and bleeding, that impressed him most.

The younger Masters as he advanced in years shared his father's cause. His Irish and Indian blood, under the influence of whiskey, combined to make him a dangerous character at an early age. His prowess and nerve readily won for him the admiration of the drunken clans. After passing into his teens, young Mike was a power to be reckoned with by the enemies of the Masters family.

While the elder Masters frequently rose to great heights in praising his son's courage and physical powers, he was not unmindful that he should receive a fair degree of mental training.

To accomplish this, Mike was sent to the tribal school at Tahlequah.

In school his progress was also marked. He entered as heartily into his new life and accepted the requirements of the faculty with the same zeal that had made him the young hero and champion at home. Ere long young Masters demonstrated that he possessed strong mental powers as well as physical strength and courage. He also had a frank way of always telling the truth, that won for him the admiration of the officers and teachers of the institution.

The social and religious influence of the seminary aided in bringing great changes to the semi-civilized life of the young student. These marked improvements, with his frank temperament, led some of the members of the faculty and citizens of Tahlequah, who had the good of the Cherokee people at heart, to regard him as one of the promising young men of the nation.

Upon his return home, however, at the close of the school, these hopeful signs of reform and development would disappear. The conduct and conversation of his associates, and the general environments of the home would fall like a dark shadow over his budding and promising life. The transformation of the young man was always great ; so much so, that at times he him-

self was amazed at the changes. He would often long to return and seek the associations of the seminary which had been the means of discovering, and, to an extent, developing new purposes in his life. But bad company and language, the impious and debauched life of his father and the low and depressing surroundings of the ill-kept home had been a part of his existence from his earliest recollections, and he supposed were to continue as they had always been.

When only a small boy he was taught by his depraved father and associates to drink and gamble, and now in his young manhood he was expected to join in the frequent drunken revelries. At first, on returning home, his conscience smote him as he joined his old companions in their frantic orgies, but that small voice was soon hushed by the overwhelming influence arrayed against it, and he was again ere long the leader of the neighborhood clans.

The few years in school qualified Mike to handle business with a degree of system and accuracy. His aptness in making calculations and keeping accounts afforded his father much pleasure; and he took great credit to himself that he had been generous enough to provide the means to educate his son. But the habit of drinking and gambling, which he himself had

taught the boy, was a matter of no concern to him.

Soon after returning home from the seminary, having spent four years at Tahlequah, Mike married a successful farmer's daughter. At this time the young man enjoyed the utmost confidence of his father, who took great pleasure in making a good selection of a farm on which the young couple were to settle, the farm to be Mike's allotment, by virtue of his being a citizen of the Cherokee Nation.

Shortly after taking charge of his own affairs Mike was also placed in control of the school interest, then administered under the tribal laws of the nation. He was greatly pleased with the responsibility and took special pains to discharge the duties of that office. It delighted him to see the children in school, and he frequently visited them. When in their presence the refining influences of his early training, in the seminary, were so pronounced that all traces of a reckless and debauched leader disappeared. In the school he was as gentle and kind as the trusting child. Of all the experiences that were a part of his life, save that of his young wife, which served to check the tide of wickedness into which he was being plunged, the little schoolhouse was his only refuge. There he could be free from temptation. It, too, brought

back to him memories of pleasant associations. While thinking and working in the interest of the children, there would often come to him visions of a life free from the debasing habits that held the young manhood of the country in their relentless grasp. At times he longed to be free from them, and the little schoolhouse for a while encouraged him. But its influence, like the still, small voice of his conscience, forced to combat such powers of evil, too, was hushed by the increasing flood of wickedness.

As the years passed the drinking habit, and all it entails, grew on young Masters. Gambling was common; and with the years, that blighting curse sunk its fangs deep into his whole life. He frequently lost heavily. At times all of his available property was swept away in a game of poker. Occasionally he would win, but failure or success only served to plunge him deeper and deeper into gambling's treacherous power. In a few years all the property he could control was consumed in the vortex of dissipation. His father was so estranged from him on account of his losses and neglect of business that he refused further aid or protection to him or his family. While the elder Masters would often bewail the fact that his son had made such shipwreck of his life, yet at no time did he think to reproach

himself with the truth that he, his father, was the primary cause of this stranding of the son's manhood.

After long years of dissipation, and when all hopes for Mike's reformation—even by himself—had been ground to powder, there would still, in his sober moments, come to him the vision of that purer life which attracted him in his earliest manhood. He would sometimes wonder how or why it was, that visions of better things would appear to one, such as he was, a stranded human being, a derelict, tossed and driven by the winds of dissipation. It has ever been so with poor and helpless men. They may not know that such visions are the calls of a loving God, seeking to win them back from the power of sin. Yet it is true. It is the call of him who came to seek and to save the lost. Men like Mike are helpless, as much so as poor blind Bartimæus; while Jesus is as ready to save them from their depraved life as he was to heal the blind beggar, yet they, like the beggar, must go to him if they would be saved from the power of sin.

CHAPTER III

A NEW COUNTRY

MODOC was not only the name of the post-office, but it stood for a section of country. The post-office was established in the seventies, before any railroads were built. In the early days the entire region, composing the western part of the Cherokee Nation, was regarded as fit for grazing purposes only ; and that particular section, which finally became known as Modoc, was considered one of the choice portions. The grass was luxuriant and the whole territory well watered by a number of small streams which headed back in the hill country to the west. The low land adjacent to those streams and extending some distance back from them on either side was covered with timber such as oak, hickory, walnut and other growths. This timber afforded abundant shade for the cattle during the heat of the summer, and protection from the storms of winter. Such advantages, together with the bountiful supply of water and abundant grass, made the Modoc country an ideal place for cattle raising.

James Clark was one of the first enterprising

white men to discover this ideal region. He was also the first white man to appropriate a portion of its superior advantages. Clark drifted into the country in 1832, stopping at Fort Gibson with the Rangers sent to that fort by the United States government. He made the "Tour of the Prairies" with the Rangers and parties from the East, commissioned by the United States to negotiate a treaty with certain tribes of Indians located in what is now central and western Oklahoma. Clark possessed an adventurous spirit and enjoyed the confidence of the commission and United States army officers. He also enjoyed the personal friendship of Washington Irving, who accompanied the commission on its trip to the West from St. Louis.

After returning to Fort Gibson, from the "Tour of the Prairies," Clark decided to remain in the Indian Territory. Frequent excursions were made into other little known regions of the West. It was on one of these expeditions that he discovered the attractive country afterward known as Modoc, and some years later he came with his Indian wife to build his home and appropriate its superior advantages.

Clark's aggressive spirit soon won the friendship of the Indians, and he in turn became an adopted member of the tribe. He was devoted

to the interest of the Cherokee people—so far as he was able to discourage them from adopting other white men ; but in after years it was a common report that James Clark's large accumulations were at the expense of the people he professed to love.

After settling in the Modoc country Clark's holdings soon doubled, and he became an influential man in the management of tribal affairs. His cattle, roaming over that region which his prophetic eye had marked, growing sleek and fat on the succulent grass, were numbered by the thousand. The men whom he employed to protect his interests on the range were not hampered with instructions ; only his interests were not to be neglected. One of the orders to be faithfully observed, that he might not be robbed of his own, was to place upon all unbranded stock found in the region the imprint of Clark's ownership.

This method of acquiring property often led to trouble. Other men made the discovery that the Modoc portion of the Cherokee Nation was a desirable stock country, and they made bold, as Clark had done, to appropriate its advantages. Among them Mike Masters was one of the most aggressive. This clashing of interests often led to hostilities in which one or more of the cowboys lost their lives.

Harry Keith, who drifted across the border near Coffeyville, Kansas, was one of Clark's most faithful adherents. Where he came from no one ever knew. But that fact in those days was not sufficient to raise a suspicion derogatory to a newcomer's character. All that was required was loyalty to the present interest of those he served. In this Harry Keith never failed, even to the extent of rebranding cattle where the marks of other ownerships were dimmed. After a service of a few years, Keith married a daughter of his employer and soon thereafter became one of the managers of his father-in-law's large estate.

It had become generally known that the western portion of the nation was good for farming. While opposition to breaking or plowing the land was bitter among the cowmen, yet cutting up the region into farms continued to increase.

As early as 1866 the Delaware Indians purchased from the Cherokee Nation the right to the ownership of one hundred and sixty thousand acres of land. After making this purchase that tribe moved from Kansas to the Cherokee country. While very few of the Delawares were farmers, yet they were a home-loving people, and many of them settled in the western part known as Modoc.

Finally it became a recognized fact that this region could no longer be held for grazing purposes. In compliance with this conclusion, James Clark disposed of much of the land he claimed by making leases to white farmers for a term of years. Thus after a bitter contest between the cowmen themselves, and also between the cowmen and farmers, there came a change from that of a grazing to an agricultural country.

Harry Keith knew what would happen. With the increase of population and especially the coming of the Delawares, who received large payments of money from the United States government, a demand for supplies nearer home would be created. To meet such a demand he opened up the first store in that region south of Coffeyville, and west of the Verdigris River. It proved a success. Harry's trade with the Indians was good, and the prices they were forced to pay greatly enriched the merchant.

In a short time after opening the store a post-office was established, and Modoc became a recognized place on the map.

Some years later the St. Louis and Iron Mountain Railroad was built from Fort Smith, Arkansas, to Coffeyville, Kansas. This road missed Modoc, passing some miles to the east. At its

nearest point there was only a siding and watering tank. But the trains stopped there to receive and discharge passengers, and also to unload freight. It was here that Haden Wilson first stopped to begin his work as a Sunday-school missionary in this section, and here he met Mike Masters.

When Modoc began to attract attention as a farming country, its choicest lands were leased by white farmers. However, some of the Indians located in the vicinity where the post-office was afterward established.

The settlement of the Indian families led to the building of the little schoolhouse in which was taught a six-months school during each year for the benefit of the Indian children. While a large per cent. of the children in the community were white, no provision was made for their education.

The white farmers had been attracted to the nation on account of the favorable conditions for farming and the long term leases on land at a nominal cost.

The fact that only a few of them owned or could own the land had a depressing effect on the educational, moral and religious interest of the entire country. The lack of the element of permanency prevented some, who understood the need of schools and a higher standard of

morals, from taking active steps along these lines. There was little reverence for the Sabbath day or regard for the holy Bible. It was true that occasionally a citizen sent a son or daughter to the national school at Tahlequah, but in most instances these students would return to their homes as Mike Masters had done, to find such a contrast between the ideal life of which they had a glimpse, and the real life in which they lived every hour of the day, that they soon settled down in what seemed to be the only way open to them.

True, religious matters and the Bible were frequently discussed at the store; yet such discussions generally ended by impressing the youths, who often heard them, that the Bible and the Christian religion were frauds. Harry Keith prided himself on violently criticizing both. His opposition was always pronounced. In fact, he was determined that no church organization should gain a footing in the community, and had several times secured infidels to visit the little schoolhouse and deliver lectures in which the Bible and Jesus Christ were severely condemned. All this resulted in practically intimidating those who did not believe as he did.

Not all the people, it is true, were disbelievers; there was, however, but one individual,

Mrs. Holmes, who was a professing Christian at the time of Haden Wilson's visit. "Uncle Bill" Massey would at times take a bold stand against Harry Keith, but his inconsistent life, inasmuch as he got drunk occasionally, and when angry would curse, was a great humiliation to him in his sober moments; and because he was guilty of such conduct he would lay no claims to being a Christian.

In fact, when a young man in Missouri, he was converted and lived a consistent Christian life for several years. But during his long residence in the Indian Territory he had fallen away from his early profession. Yet "Uncle Bill's" loyalty in the support of his belief caused many to regard him with a marked degree of reverence. In his arguments with Harry Keith, however, he was always subject to one weakness, that of losing his temper. The victory in the minds of many who would hear the heated discussion between the infidel and "Uncle Bill" was not always on the side of the infidel. Occasionally he would attack the disbeliever with arguments that he was unable to answer. Then Harry Keith would resort to his old schemes of provoking his antagonist to wrath, which was always followed by a volley of oaths. These oaths were the refuge of the infidel, for the reason that the listening

crowd would be moved to uproarious laughter, and that ended the arguments.

It was to this community that Haden Wilson had voluntarily gone for the express purpose of spending at least ten days. His plans were to hold services each night during that time, and to establish a Sunday-school.

The little schoolhouse erected years before for the Indian children was the only building available for such services. It was necessary to get the consent of the directors of the school district to use it. Harry Keith was one of them and, as Mike had remarked, whatever he said was law. It was true there were two other members of the board, but Keith dictated all the business at that time. It had been the custom to use the building for all purposes of a public nature, such as shows, debates, dances and occasionally, in bad weather, those who gambled would resort to the schoolhouse. Sometimes, too, a preacher would venture that way and hold a service in it.

CHAPTER IV

THE MISSIONARY'S FIRST EXPERIENCE IN THE MODOC COUNTRY

WHEN the wagon in which Mike and Haden Wilson rode stopped at the store, it was twelve o'clock. The missionary proceeded at once to see the merchant, who was pointed out by some of the loungers about the store. He was tall, at least six feet, large of bone and clothed with very little extra flesh—a raw-boned six-footer. His hands and feet were also large and, as he moved about, one got the impression that he was a conspirator. His big hands, with their long, bony fingers, made the missionary think of a snake. There was no warm, hearty clasp, but a cold, almost slimy, touch. His face, lank, skinny and gaunt, harmonized with his hands and feet. His eyebrows were heavy and they, with his lowering forehead, gave one the impression that he owned a very brutish nature. His eyes were small and black, and were never still, refusing to stand for a searching glance. That they were the windows of his soul appeared to be fully understood by Harry

Keith, and he was determined that his soul should not be explored.

After introducing himself, the missionary entered at once into an explanation of his work, and the object of his visit to Modoc. The boldness and candor of the young man astonished the merchant. It was the first time in many years that any one had been daring enough to make so frank a statement of his plans, which were altogether contrary to Keith's views. Others who approached him along such lines did so with an air of apology. But this young man had no apology to offer. With him clearly his work was a business of importance, and to do that work was his greatest purpose.

"Well, Mr. Wilson, you understand we do not care for your kind of work," said the merchant.

"I have understood that you seldom have preaching and that you have never had a Sunday-school," replied the missionary. "But I suppose there are some who would like to have some religious services, and I am sure that the children would be glad to attend a Sunday-school."

"You will find it hard; I guess you will," and he gave the young man a brief, searching glance of inquiry as if to learn whether he had the nerve and the good common sense to meet

and overcome the opposition which he knew would be arrayed against him.

"You can have the schoolhouse, but I'll guarantee you will not want it two weeks," said the merchant, in a bantering tone.

"I may get through before that time," replied the missionary, "but I have planned to spend two weeks here at present."

With the preliminaries relative to the schoolhouse settled, the missionary next set about to engage a room where he could make his home, and he was not long in getting located.

Haden Wilson was deeply impressed with the importance of the task he was undertaking. Already he had been made to feel that there were breakers ahead. He felt his utter inability to accomplish his mission in his own name. By years of experience he had come to know in his weakness that there was strength in Christ's promises; the only trouble was to trust them. This he constantly sought to do by often engaging in earnest prayer. To that end he knelt in his room that afternoon, and in his prayer asked to be guided in the special work he was about to begin.

After spending a short time in the home where he had secured lodging Haden Wilson returned to the store. It was clear that his mission had been made known. His approach

had the effect of silencing the noisy crowd. A battery of eyes was turned upon him as if he were a visitor from another planet. The crowd's curiosity was met with frankness. To a number he introduced himself, and most of the men were respectful, yet some manifested a coarse and boorish manner. James Murray, a noted character in the neighborhood, showed his rudeness when the missionary asked him to attend the services.

"I never go to such places except to help the tramp preachers to move on," he said in a swaggering manner.

The crowd laughed. The missionary smiled, but did not show that he was intimidated.

"If I am invited to that kind of a service I may be there," said Murray, giving some of the boys a wink, and they laughed again.

"I suppose you make some investigations before you take part in that kind of service," remarked the missionary.

"All preachers are about the same," rejoined Murray, squaring himself for an argument or anything else that might follow.

At this point Mike Masters broke in with the same emphatic manner that had set the little bony team into a trot.

"I expect to see to it that Mr. Wilson gets a fair deal," said Mike, with a swing of his fist

and a stamp on the floor that at once silenced Murray's bantering attitude. "I expect to see to it, Jim Murray, that you and your gang will have company on the spot if you go to the schoolhouse to-night to disturb Mr. Wilson," continued Mike in no uncertain tone.

"I'm sure," said the missionary, "that the boys will give me a chance. I have generally found them willing to do that, wherever I have gone."

This pointed statement, together with the young man's new friend's demonstration and remarks, had a good effect.

"I will be busy the remainder of the day, but I hope to see all the boys at the service to-night." And with that statement Haden Wilson withdrew and set out to visit as many homes in the community as he might be able to reach that afternoon. His object was to give publicity to his services and to invite the people to attend them. In this simple act he was engaged in his first battle with Satan for the salvation of the people of Modoc. At times, on his rounds that afternoon, the results of his efforts appeared so small that he was tempted to give up the fight. But in the struggle there came to him the promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end," and he rushed on to the next home.

On visiting one cabin, young Wilson practically forced his way inside. It was a poor and badly kept home. In response to his knock at the door an old Indian woman appeared holding it only partly open, her own body filling the space. It was an unusual sight to see her, in whose tall, statue-like body, black and piercing eyes and brown and withered face, there still lingered traces of her noble ancestors. She showed great indifference to what her visitor said, and was averse to answering questions. The missionary was a little taken back when she refused to talk, but there came to him the impression that perhaps of all whom he had called on that afternoon she most needed help. As she moved back from the door, with a wave of her hand as a signal for him to leave, he, instead of departing, gently pushed his way inside and took his stand in the middle of the room. He continued his questions, but she answered no more readily than before. Observing an enlarged picture suspended from the wall the missionary looked at it for a while. It was that of a young man. Glancing at the old woman, he saw that she was pleased.

Turning to her he asked: "Whose picture is that?"

"My boy—he my boy—he good boy."

"Where is he?" continued the missionary.

The mother hesitated, then replied: "He at Leavenworth," and would say no more.

"What does he do at Leavenworth?" not suspecting the real cause of his being there.

"He work—he in prison—he innocent—he good boy."

By continuing to ask questions about the young man, who had been sent to the United States penitentiary for a long term of years, the missionary led the poor old Indian mother to forget the reserve, and she was soon talking freely. He learned that she was sixty years of age, a widow, who had two sons; that she could not read and was not a Christian.

"Mothers' prayers can greatly help their boys," said the missionary. "Your boy at Leavenworth needs your prayers."

"Me want help my poor boy. Not good," and she placed both hands on her breast. Still holding them there, and shaking her head, she said, "Heap bad."

"Jesus can help you to be good and will hear your prayer for your boy."

"Me want Jesus," said the old Indian woman, still holding one hand on her breast.

"I will help you to find him and pray for your boy if you will go to the services."

"Me will go."



THE MISSIONARY'S FIRST CALL. AT THE OLD INDIAN WOMAN'S CABIN

With this the missionary gave her his hand and left the cabin.

Among the homes visited that afternoon was that of Mike Masters. His wife was a tired little woman. While there was an air of tidiness in the little two-roomed cottage, yet every article of furniture was of the cheapest character. The children, who stood in silence about the room with a look of anxiety in their faces, were scantily clad. When the object of his visit was explained there was a visible expression of relief on the mother's face. It was not unusual for strangers to visit their home, but the purpose of such calls was generally to collect debts contracted by Mike during his drunken sprees. So when it was learned that the object of the present visit was of a helpful nature, in the interest of the children, the tired little woman could not keep back the tears.

In her early girlhood, back in the state of Missouri, she was a member of the little Sunday-school. The memories of those sweet, innocent days in her young life, the contrast which the years had brought her ; the great difference in her own childhood and that of her children—all this flashing through her mind came near unnerving Mrs. Masters, who for more than eighteen years had been tried in the hardest school of life.

The missionary understood it all. His heart was full of sympathy for the mother and the helpless children. While these children bore in their pinched, pale faces and on their bodies the marks of poverty, there were in their appealing looks and regular and well-formed features expressions of gentleness, love and devotion to their mother that was beautiful. She in her long suffering had not forgotten or thrown aside gentleness and patience. The full blessing of both had rewarded her in the beautiful and loving devotion of her children. The father was a most impatient man when drinking, but his outbursts of rage had been borne meekly. The meekness was, and had always been, the children's refuge. How she held to it no one seemed to know. In silence she bore her disappointments and afflictions and clung to what she felt, in the assurance of her heart, was her duty.

When the missionary left that scant and humble home he had an enlarged vision of his mission to the people of Modoc.

"I must win that man," he said almost audibly, as he rushed along the dusty road to the next house. The prize was a glorious one. To win Mike signified far more than saving a man. It meant the lifting from the wife and mother a load of poverty that hung like a mill-

stone about her neck, and bringing to the children much more than they could hope for, trained, as they had been, to know the hardest conditions of life ; it would bring to them happy childhood ; strike from their tender, innocent lives the shackles that bound them prisoners to all the curses that drink brings to home, mother and childhood.

“It must be done,” he said over and over again, and the vision of saving a man and his wife and children did not leave the missionary until he was face to face with the mother in the next home.

CHAPTER V

THE MISSIONARY'S FIRST SERVICE IN MODOC

AFTER calling at the last house, Haden Wilson hurried back toward the store. Coming near he was surprised to see so many men on the outside in groups. His approach was met by a stare from a score of eyes, the same to which he had been subjected several times during the day.

After seeing the increased crowd, and surmising what it all might mean, he did not stop, but went direct to his home and took a seat on the gallery for a brief rest. From where he sat he had a good view of the store and its surroundings. The men were still collected in groups. Some were moving about in a more or less excited manner. The missionary became deeply interested in what he saw, and he did not watch long before he was convinced that a number of the men were already under the influence of liquor. Voices grew louder and men rushed about in a manner that clearly indicated its effects. The bootlegger was abroad and at that time was plying his ruinous business. Voices continued to grow more boisterous.

Two young men left the crowd and rode away in a gallop, yelling like wild Indians. The yells were accompanied by a volley of pistol shots. Looking a while after the young men, who continued their demonstrations, he again turned to watch the crowd at the store. This time he recognized Mike Masters, surrounded by several men, some laughing, others cursing, and Mike apparently in a great rage, opposing what seemed to be advocated by those about him. Mike was demonstrating his protests with violent language and gestures.

Haden Wilson half wished, as he watched the movements of the men and as it came to him more fully what it all meant, that he had not made the appointment to preach that night. While he was not altogether a stranger to such scenes, he had never become so used to them as not to dread facing such conditions. He was a timid young man and often felt a dread in standing before a reasonably civil crowd. From all outward appearances he was sure the crowd he would have to face at the schoolhouse that night would be a noisy one at least, and that there would be some interferences with the service. Although he was timid and dreaded to face an ill-tempered or noisy gathering, it had been necessary a number of times for him to do so since taking up mission work.

"I will do my duty," he mentally resolved, after sitting some time watching the gathering unrest of the men at the store.

When the missionary reached the school building there were but few present, the crowd consisting of children, girls and boys, with very few adults. Uncle Bill Finley was there, also the old Indian woman whom he had visited that afternoon. But judging from the stern expression on her face there was no indication that the service might mean anything to her. The missionary made it a point to pass around and speak to each one, or in some way show that he recognized them. He was kindly received by most of those present, but some were resentful. A group of girls who were manifestly bent on showing their disregard for him laughed in his face when they refused to take his proffered hand.

By eight-thirty a fairly good crowd had gathered. Some few were standing on the outside looking in at the door and windows. Those inside were engaged in laughing and talking. The congregation was asked to join in singing. Some complied, others were indifferent. By the time the song was completed the missionary, by giving careful attention, had located several good voices in the congregation.

"I'm glad to hear you sing so well," he re-

marked at the close of the song. This statement had the effect of drawing his congregation closer to him.

Haden Wilson had a pleasant voice, a kind eye, and at times a smile would play across his face adding to his personal appearance; all of which were at his command that night.

While he was not a professional singer, yet necessity had forced him to a training that had developed his ability to sing to a passable degree. His voice was not strong, but it was smooth and clear, and he had acquired the happy faculty of getting the people to join in his song services. That he was able to do so was always a matter of pride with him. It had helped him out of many a hard place. When he would fail to win his congregation or to hold it—and he did sometimes fail—in presenting his message, it was seldom that he failed to interest them in a song service.

Following the first selection, he asked that they join in another. The chorus, after the first verse, was repeated several times. A number of others joined in this, and by the time the chorus following the last verse was reached nearly every one present joined. Why they did so, few could have explained. There was a power, somehow, that swept them all into line, and it required a greater effort to resist

than was necessary to join in the singing. And every one enjoyed it.

"That was fine," again remarked the missionary at the close. And the young man and his congregation were drawn one link closer together.

At the conclusion of the second song some of those who had been standing on the outside came in and took seats. Following this last movement, the missionary asked that all bow their heads for a short prayer. Some few did, but others continued to sit upright. From one or two sections there were loud whisperings and suppressed laughter. To comply with such a request was unusual, and some seemed to think to do so meant that they were to represent themselves as praying, a duty that very few in the neighborhood of Modoc had ever performed. The thought was amusing.

The missionary prayed. When he began, some looked up in surprise. They had never heard any one pray in that way before. He appeared to be in the very presence of his God, and was addressing him in the fullest confidence that what he asked for would be granted. It was the simple petition of one who had faith. That faith swept all the barriers away and enabled the young man to approach his heavenly Father as he would his kind and helpful earthly

parent. The disturbance which was manifested in the beginning soon subsided, and there was silence. All ears were open to hear the pleading and confident appeal. During the prayer more than one heart was made glad, that in it the fathers and mothers, the children and young people of the community were remembered.

At the close of the prayer there was a greater feeling of reverence in the congregation. The girls, who had shown such rudeness toward the missionary and for some time continued giddy in manner, had become more subdued.

This spirit of reverence was rudely shocked when some young men entered the room in a swaggering manner, and after taking seats near the crowd of giggling girls, began to talk in low tones and occasionally laugh. They were under the influence of liquor. The group of girls, who twenty minutes before had refused to shake hands with the missionary, looked hard at the young men, and as they continued, one of the young women reached over and violently shook a disturber. At this the young man gave a shriek as if in great pain. The crowd laughed.

It was seen at once that the purpose of those coming in last was to disturb and probably to break up the meeting. Some expected to see the young man fly into a rage and roundly

abuse the disturbers. But in that they were disappointed.

During the confusion that followed more men came in and stalked about the room, pretending to look for a place to sit down. They, too, were under the influence of liquor. Two of them found a vacant seat, and one, in attempting to sit down, missed his aim and fell sprawling on the floor. The crowd again laughed. The companion of the one on the floor attempted to aid him to his seat, but feigning drunkenness he, too, fell and rolled over the floor near the young woman, whose vigorous shake had brought from the young man such frantic yells. Reaching for a stick, which had been used as a window prop, but which had been discarded for a longer one, the young woman seized it and turning on the intruder, began vigorously to pound him about the head and body. He soon retreated to a safe distance and began to rail at his friend for allowing him to be "beat up" while he was trying to aid him so he could enjoy the worship. He also turned to the preacher, who was standing quietly on the little stage, and began to reproach him for allowing people to be "beat up" as he had been when they came to enjoy the preaching.

"If this is the way you are going to run your

meeting—have people beat up instead of preaching to them—I'm in favor of stopping you right now. We don't need a fighting school; we've had plenty of lessons in that line. What we need is to be taught how to quit fighting, and I thought that was your business."

Following this little lecture he rubbed his hand over his head and, as he did so, gave a surprised start when he discovered that blood was flowing from a wound, caused by the vigorous use of the stick. He exclaimed, "By grashus, Bill, that gal came as near as Christmas killing me!" This statement and the frantic actions of the victim provoked laughter from the crowd.

A half dozen more men came in from the store, all evidently under the influence of liquor. One of them, seeing the victim of the girl's wrath standing in the aisle, bleeding and calling for a doctor, rushed up to him and demanded if the parson had licked him already.

"No," he roared, "worse than that. That gal of Sam Smith's won't give him a chance. She's took the job."

The confusion continued to grow and more men came in. It was now clear that the whole procedure, except the use of the stick, was to provoke the missionary to wrath, break up the meeting, and force him to leave in double quick time.

Mike understood that afternoon that such had been planned and vigorously protested. He swore vehemently that he would kill the man who interfered with young Wilson. That since he had something to do with his coming to the community, he felt that it was his duty to protect him. And, too, during the ride from the tank to the store, he was drawn toward the young missionary, and now he was ready to defend him at any cost.

Those who knew Mike understood that it would not be safe to attempt to carry out their plans as long as he could interfere. So some of the leaders, with the advice of Harry Keith, conspired to get him out of the way by making him drunk. Mike fell a victim to their design, drank heavily, and as it set his blood on fire, his rage toward those who were plotting against the young man grew more furious. By eighty-three his frenzy was beyond control. Several fights had already been started in which he was an aggressive participant. This highly inflamed condition of the man was well understood, for it was a sign that he would soon collapse. That meant that he would subside into a sluggish stupor for the remainder of the night. By nine o'clock that state of drunkenness, which deprives a man of action as well as reason, had taken complete possession of Mike, and he lay

helpless, battered and bruised, on the grass at the back of the store—thus removing, as Harry Keith supposed, the only obstacle in the way of getting the missionary out of the country.

It had been planned that the crowd would go in several groups to the schoolhouse. Each group, after entering, was to do something that would either provoke the preacher or some member of the gang. In the end a fight was to ensue and a cry raised against the missionary. When that stage of the game was reached they were sure the young man would be glad to get away. A chance was to be given him to run, and all would enjoy the fun. Parties with firearms were stationed along the road, which it was supposed he would take, and these were to open up on him with a vengeance. This they knew would increase his fright, and at the thought of how he would “burn the wind,” as they called it, some were convulsed with laughter.

The store had been gradually deserted, the crowd appearing, as had been previously arranged, at the schoolhouse. The part that had been played by Mary Smith, especially her vigorous use of the window prop on the head of Jacen Provine, had not been arranged for, and therefore had the effect of disconcerting

their movements. And, too, the perfect calmness of the young man, whom they had marked for their victim, during the entire disturbance, was a phase of the procedure that they had not planned for.

The crowd, however, swayed and swaggered about the room, and some moved near the stage where the young man stood. One man pretending to lose his footing fell in the aisle, and in an effort to gain his balance, came too near Mary Smith's club. No sooner was he on the floor than she began pounding him with a vim over the head. Such a determined and unexpected assault from a young woman set him to roaring and protesting his innocence, all of which was great fun for the crowd. Some parties in the rear of the building called out, "Hit 'im again." The victim soon retreated to a safe distance and stood against the wall on the other side, rubbing his wounds.

Silence for the first time in the last twenty minutes came over the crowd. Why every one had ceased to say or do something, no one knew. But all eyes were fixed on the young man, who stood as quietly and as unmoved as if he faced a bevy of schoolgirls instead of a drunken and vicious mob.

The missionary saw that this moment was his opportunity. Opening the book, which all

the while had been held in his hand, he said, "Let us sing number ——."

This statement from the young man increased the quietness as well as the surprise of some. It was expected that the disorder would be severely rebuked which in turn would open up the way for the ruffians to renew their disturbances. Being thus shut off from any direct means of renewing the trouble, those bent on mischief waited in silence for their turn. They did not want to be defeated in their purpose and sought to use discretion to that end, hence their silence—that they might find the proper method of attack.

"Before beginning the song," the missionary stated, "I want to say that it is one your mothers sang when you were smiling, innocent babies. Years ago when she sat by your cradle, or held you in her loving arms and sang these beautiful lines, you would look up into her pure, smiling face and coo as innocently as the little dove in its nest. Do you not remember your innocent childhood? And crowded into those days are there not the cheerful smiles and tender voice of mother? Those were sweet days. Let us in this song go back to them and live for a few moments with our innocent childhood, and feel again the power of our mothers' tender care and love."

Following this statement, which made the boisterous crowd understand it was facing a new order of man, the missionary began in his tenderest tones to sing. But no one joined in the first verse nor the chorus. On the second two or three attempted to follow, but soon ceased. The young man sang on. He seemed to be lost to all about him, to everything but the pleading of the mother for her wandering boy. The crowd of rough men stood transfixed. Before he had completed the last verse Haden Wilson knew that the victory was his—that he had won. There was something in the young man—it was not a defiant spirit ; no, it was not the spirit of antagonism—but there was something that disarmed every man that stood before him that night.

When the last sound of the chorus had died away, he said, "I'm glad you like that song. At some other time I will tell you more about it, and what it has been to me." The crowd did not move, but remained as if bound by a spell of reverence for the young man before it.

The missionary announced that he would hold services the following day at eleven o'clock and at night, also each night during the week. "I am glad," he said, "to see so many out to-night, and I trust you will be present at each of the services to follow." Then he said, "Let us be

dismissed," and he lifted up his voice with such thankfulness to the Father for his tender care that it was guessed by some how it was that the rough spirit of the men had been changed to that of meekness.

There is a power in the faith that trusts God. But there are very few Christians who seek to obtain that power in the way that gives them strength. When Jesus said, "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness," he stated a truth as definite and universal as the law of gravitation. The race has progressed in proportion as it has understood and applied the latter law. The impotency of the Christian has been marked by his failure to understand and apply the former. There are thousands of souls crying out daily for light of the revealed Christ, and yet they are pigmies in his service. If one enters the service of Christ in his own strength, he is impotent. We can only lose our impotency by forsaking all and following him with a faith as clearly defined as is the faith of the individual who, knowing that his credit is good at the bank, believes that his check will be cashed.

This nation can be won for Christ in a generation; but before that can be done, his followers must, with glad, willing hearts and lives, answer the demand that he made of the rich

young man, "Forsake all and follow me." If the Christian wants to know how to realize the truth and power of faith in Jesus Christ, he must gather up all his ambitions, his idols, property—absolutely all, and know which is first in his life; these or Christ. If the former, he will have no more power in his name than the gambler. He is not and cannot be within his law. In "forsaking all" we go away—it may be from friends, property, ease, a cherished ambition. Then in that hour of struggle, in his name, we can claim his promises, and with our lives in harmony with his will, we are equipped as a laborer in his vineyard.

Haden Wilson knew what "forsaking all" meant in his own life. He knew also what it was to refuse to surrender all. But one day he was able to say, "I will do it," and faced the world with all he had cherished most against him. But he did not falter. Few, if any, knew his struggle. In that surrender of all, he found a new and richer revelation of Christ. It was through the power of that revelation that he won the rough men of Modoc.

CHAPTER VI

AFTER THE SERVICE

AFTER the meeting at the schoolhouse was dismissed, most of the crowd left at once, especially those who went there for the purpose of raising a disturbance. They did not even return to the store as it had been planned for them to do, but went in different directions to their homes. Seeing that their plans had failed, very few of the men were willing to discuss the matter or admit that they were parties to a plot to commit a wrong against such a man as they found the missionary to be. There were a few, however, who were displeased with the outcome and soundly abused their leader for the failure.

Harry Keith remained at the store, waiting for a report. Several times he chuckled to himself as he imagined that he could see the young man in his fright rush out to escape the mob, and when free from one, dash into the arms of another, who would with increased fury set upon him. Such a scene to Harry Keith, as he reviewed it in his mind, was highly

entertaining. It had not occurred to him, since Mike had collapsed into a drunken stupor, that their plan might fail.

All of his thoughts and actions were on such a low plane, and his standard for men was so debased that he was almost impervious to the noble and beautiful traits in any human life. With him in most instances and conditions, human beings occupied the common level with the lower animals. The noble traits of mind and heart, their power to win others to the beautiful and good, were no longer realities with him. In his youth and early manhood it was not so. But in his maturer years he had failed to walk steadily in the paths of virtue and honesty; to silence his conscience he took refuge in the doctrine that his responsibility ended with his life. Thus deluded he had gone through the years, and while it had brought to him nothing but a harvest of barren regrets, he willingly remained a slave to his folly. If he sought to express sympathy for the unfortunate, it was heartless; if he professed to be in harmony with those who labored to aid others, his professions were as sounding brass. Mastered by such a life it would be hard to conceive that men with high and noble purposes still lived, and that most people could be influenced by the power of such characters. The beautiful,

pure and good were out of harmony with his low ideals, and with his real life as he lived it. If either called to him, it was like the dewdrop reflecting all the beauty of the rainbow as it lost its identity in the stagnant water of a filthy pool.

The thirty minutes' time which Harry Keith had allotted to carry out his plan was awaited with deep interest by him. As the time passed, he was puzzled that no one returned to report the proceedings. He was growing anxious, but his anxiety was to some degree relieved by two young men entering the store. The merchant stood ready to receive a report of the fun. The young men were not parties to the compact to disturb the meeting, yet he expected them to have something to say about the trouble at the schoolhouse. When they failed to do so, he was surprised.

"Have you been to the schoolhouse, boys?" he asked, hoping to lead them to begin the story.

"Yes," each replied at the same time, and then a pause followed.

"Have a good crowd?" the merchant inquired.

"Yes, a big crowd," said one of the young men, and then another pause.

Harry Keith was becoming more impatient,

and he ventured to ask again : " Is the meeting out ? "

" Yes," again replied the young men in concert.

The merchant walked hurriedly to the front door and looked out. He could not understand how it was that the men did not return to the store.

" Was Mike Masters at the meeting ? " the merchant asked, knowing full well that Mike at that time was dead drunk at the back of the store. But he asked the question to draw the young men out to tell about the meeting.

" No," was the reply, and another pause.

He waited a few moments and then asked, " Did anything happen at the schoolhouse to-night ? "

" You bet there did."

At this point the missionary and another young man entered the store. The merchant could hardly believe his eyes. His first impulse was that of joy, for he had come to fear that the mob had done its worst to the young man, and while he was an adept in shifting responsibilities, he could not help feeling his liability, to a degree at least, if the mob's action had resulted as he had begun to suspect. The impulse was for a moment only, when there rushed into his heart the long-nourished bitterness against

the teachings for which the young man stood. His mood was sullen. It had dawned upon him that the men had failed. And he began under his breath violently to curse them. By the time the two young men had made a small purchase and left the store, Harry Keith felt that he had been outraged. Others dropped in and by degrees he heard what took place at the schoolhouse. When he had learned the whole story, and that the young man had made friends, he was in a towering rage. The merchant was now an avowed enemy of the young missionary, and would go to almost any extreme to defeat the purposes for which he was laboring.

But there was one condition in the Modoc community with which Harry Keith had to reckon, and that was that his influence was limited to a few of the most desperate characters in that section. Prior to the present time he had felt the weight of public sentiment against him, and had learned to be cautious when that sentiment was pronounced. Taking counsel of this experience he concluded that he would not arrange any further plans until he knew to what extent the missionary had made friends with the people. He knew that it was possible for an aggressive and capable young man, as he believed the missionary to be, to

have a powerful influence for either right or wrong, and openly to oppose him would only result in the defeat of his purpose.

One thing, however, he settled that night before he slept, and that was to hold in his ranks the faithful few who were ready to do his bidding. To that extent there was well defined opposition to the efforts of the missionary, and just as much more as the merchant might be able to set in motion.

Haden Wilson knew full well that every movement he made would be watched by his enemies. He also knew that they would not hesitate to resort to acts of violence if such acts would serve to force him out of the country. On the other hand he already felt sure that he would have the people with him. And that any other plans of a violent nature would be withheld from the public. Whatever it might be he was not disconcerted in the least and, in a spirit of meekness, he resolved that he would proceed with his work.

CHAPTER VII

THE FIRST SUNDAY IN MODOC

THE service on Sunday morning was well attended, and at night the crowd was large. At each service particular stress was placed on the music. Sufficient song-books had been provided by the missionary, and a number of people entered heartily into the singing.

He noted again the presence of several very good voices. These, and the willingness which the people showed to accede to his request, were encouraging to the missionary and to a degree convinced him that they were not with Harry Keith in his opposition.

At the morning hour the missionary talked twenty minutes, and let the people go at twelve o'clock. His theme was the "Prodigal Son," and he read the whole story. As an illustration of his theme, at the conclusion, he told of a boy, who had left his home in the state of Missouri, before the days of railroads, and sought his fortune in the far West; how he was sorely afflicted by disease and, penniless and friendless, refused to return to his father's home, but

remained with those who had no love or sympathy for him and died a miserable beggar, although the father had done all he could to find his prodigal boy.

The story won—more than one looked through their tears at the speaker. He closed by saying that every one present who is away from God—who is a sinner—and who rejects his plans to save them—is, in God's sight, like that poor penniless boy out in the Rocky Mountains.

The last thought almost startled some of the members of the congregation. They had been interested, their sympathy had been aroused for the suffering boy, and to have the lesson brought home to them—that they were equally helpless—brought them to see at least in part as they had never seen before the real application of the great parable of the Prodigal Son.

Seed had been sown and the young man prayed that it might fall into good ground and bring forth an abundant harvest.

Sunday afternoon a group of young men collected at the shady side of Harry Keith's store building and discussed the events of the night before. None of them seemed to understand how or why the program previously arranged was not carried out. James Murray and one or two others were bold enough to say in a

swaggering manner that if they were to go through it again they would pull the young chap down and send him out over the road in double quick time. Such boasting, however, did not meet with flattering encouragement. Another young man, Clarence Bush, remarked that while he was with the crowd that went to the schoolhouse to raise a disturbance, he did not see why they wanted to run the missionary out of the country. "He appears to be a nice young man, and I think we should let him alone." Some others present were of the same opinion.

"It's all Harry Keith's work," exclaimed Ed Crockett, who arrived in time to hear the remarks of Clarence Bush. "And now he is cavorting like a madman. He swears that the young man will have to light a shuck before the last of the week. He says he will lead the crowd next time and will not be bluffed with a song, prayer, or Mary Smith's stick."

That afternoon Haden Wilson walked out a mile or so from his boarding-place. He was anxious about the evening services and deeply absorbed in his plans. He was sure the crowd would be large, and to make a favorable impression meant much to his success. On the way back he passed by Mike Masters' home, and on coming near he decided to go in and

speak to the family. The first one he saw on entering was Mike. He was in his right mind, but his appearance was distressing, suffering from his late drunk. In his helpless condition of the night before he had been severely beaten, and when he was reminded of it, as he often was by the pain he suffered, he would break into such frantic rage as to frighten the children from the house. All day he swore vengeance against every one who was a party to his misery.

When Mike saw his young friend enter the room he smiled, and while that smile spread over his face, which was bruised and scarred, it gave the missionary an impression that Mike was not altogether bad. Haden Wilson took a seat by the suffering man, and when he held his large, hard, bony hand in both his, Mike felt that it was the touch of a friend, and the anger that had kept him and his family miserable through the day subsided.

"You need not tell me what happened last night; I know it all." This was said by the missionary to forestall Mike, for he knew if he began the story he would soon be in a passion that would prove hurtful.

"We must not think and talk about what happened at the store any more now. None of us can help at this time what was done, but it

is necessary that you get well right soon. I want you to attend the services. I missed you to-day."

Every few moments, however, Mike would break out in his impetuous way against those who had treated him so brutally. But as the details of what happened at the schoolhouse were related, he grew quieter. When the performance of Mary Smith with her stick was told he laughed heartily, although to do so caused him great pain. The story of the song, which the missionary sang the previous night, was related. It, too, had a good effect on the man, who had for many years been moved to action by coarse and dissipated surroundings, save in the little home where the good little wife still preserved an air of refinement, courage and purity.

The missionary's visit brought a new vision into Mike's life; visions of years ago, before he was a complete slave to habit, a scorned victim of those who forged the chains that bound him, before the harsh law of necessity had forced him to grinding toil, with no cheering hope to illuminate his coming years.

Mike had been cast down so often in the past years; he had so many times failed to throw off the yoke of intemperance; had so often blasted his wife's most cherished expectations, that he

felt his star of hope for the future had set in blackest despair. He had come to look upon life as holding no prize for him. The knowledge that others regarded him as an outcast, with his coming years to live like a galley-slave, stood as a wall of adamant between him and that liberty and light which his soul at times longed to know. Everything had conspired to drag him down. In his sober moments he would curse his weakness and swear vengeance against those who conspired to betray him into the power of the enemy of hope, home, manhood and happiness.

"Curse your personal liberty," he would say when Harry Keith, standing against all restricting laws, would argue that every man had a right to drink. "Look at me and the other poor devils in this country! We have appropriated your personal liberty, associated with its advocates, bootleggers, gamblers, thieves and murderers. After years of loyalty see what it has given us in return—a wrecked manhood, wives and children bound by poverty that crushes!"

During such arguments Mike would at times grow into a great fury, and his Irish blood caused him to vindicate his views in one or both of the good old Irish ways of settling all difficulties—a fight, and then a drink. With

Mike one drink meant many more, and as long as he could argue or fight he would wage war with any one who would dispute the fact that his own life was the most powerful argument against Harry Keith's doctrine.

Thus it had come that his whole future was blotted out. He had reached that period in life where he refused to believe that it held any hope or promise for him. Mike still possessed a vigorous body and a clear mind when free from strong drink; liberated from it he would give himself to hard and incessant toil.

The missionary was hopeful that Mike would soon recover, and upon leaving said so, but promised to visit him the next day.

After the departure of the visitor the poor victim was much quieter. During that brief hour the dark clouds had drifted, but to him the vision beyond was not for Mike Masters. What followed through the night, his struggle with pain and his remorse of conscience, we will not, and cannot, record. But some who have gone the road that Mike was then traveling know full well the anguish of his soul, as he tossed and moaned on his bed of straw.

A large crowd was present at the evening service. The old Indian was there with the same stoical expression on her face. The

crowd was boisterous. Everything indicated that the reverent spirit which came over the congregation in the morning service had been swept away.

Mary Smith was the heroine of the hour. She was asked many bantering questions. Some wanted to know if she had her war club, others asked about her paint, and still others inquired what she would do if Uncle Bill Finley should get happy and shout.

The crowd laughed at all these sallies. The entrance of the missionary made no difference; the fun and jokes continued. While it all had a depressing effect on him, yet he knew that no special disrespect was intended. The people had never known any other way. To them there was very little difference in going to the schoolhouse to see a show or hear some one preach.

The song service began promptly at eight o'clock. The same plan of repeating the chorus, which the missionary had adopted as one of the methods to interest the people, was followed in the opening song. Several selections were rendered and a number of those present joined in that part of the service, all of which was a means of bringing the congregation and missionary closer together.

Haden Wilson had adopted this course for

several other reasons; the chief of which was that it served as an aid to concentrate the minds of the people on the service. This he had learned was one of the essentials of a successful service. Concentration in religious work is as needful to success as along any other line of effort, and he was always planning and working to that end.

After the prayer, through which he held the minds of his congregation, he again read the story of the Prodigal Son. In the talk that followed he placed special emphasis on the love of the father and mother for their children, and especially for those who were disobedient and many times go far wrong. At its close he again told a story of a young man who at home was disobedient, disregarding his parents' entreaties, and rudely trampled under foot all their plans for his future, left his father's roof, his opportunities, to associate with gamblers, drunkards and outlaws. His life was stormy, and when only twenty-six years of age he fell a victim to disease. His money was gone and he was in a strange land without friends. When all had failed him his thoughts turned back to the old home, and a vision of his kind father and loving and devoted mother were before him. As he lay in pain and poverty, thinking of them, and how he had ruthlessly sacrificed their love

for a life of ruin, he wept bitterly. With his feeble hands he wrote and told of his pitiable state. When the news from the wandering boy reached the parents there was a hasty drive from the farm to the railroad, and a hurried trip half across the continent by the anxious father to reach his boy and carry him back to the old home.

All were impressed with his story. The missionary followed it up by stating that all men who were sinners, away from God, are in his sight like the young man who gave up his home and parents for the associations that led to his ruin. "You, like him, are prodigals, and God, like the earthly parent, is even more ready to save all men from their sins. That means You."

The service lasted one hour and the missionary occupied only twenty minutes in his talk. In that time he made a deep impression on nearly every one. All that he said was simple and his illustrations were clear. There was no way of dodging the central truth. Some already felt, but would not admit it, that their own consciences were witnesses to the truth of what the missionary brought out in the story of the Prodigal Son. That they, in common with the whole community, were great sinners was frankly confessed in their

hearts (secretly). How it would all end they did not know. The missionary had not pointed out the way by which they were to be saved.

CHAPTER VIII

THE LIFE OF A MISSIONARY

THE services during the week were uneventful. The old organ which had been set aside as useless was worked over and served a good purpose in the services. A young lady, Miss Effie Knox, who had taken music lessons while attending school at Tahlequah, agreed to serve as organist. By this arrangement quite a number were induced to join in the services, not as a select choir, but in general singing.

After some experience with choirs, the missionary abandoned that plan of promoting song services. He had noticed that it was often the case that the leaders of the community among the young people of both sexes were of the number who took active parts in choir singing. These leaders were very often unsaved persons. The choir was a protection to them. He had further observed that there was a tendency in choirs to consider that they were exempt from all demands except to sing. Those who were religious would often claim exemptions for the reason that they served in the choir; the irreligious would seek to justify themselves for

not accepting the call of the minister for the same reason—that they were serving in the choir; and some were found who went so far as to pretend that the sermons were not preached to those who led in the singing.

The congregation and the people gradually settled down to a respectful attitude toward the missionary, but evidently that was as far as they expected to go. Harry Keith was the discordant member of the neighborhood. The fact that the people had practically sided with the missionary had served to increase his bitterness toward the young man and the cause he represented. While he sought to use discretion, hoping by that to gain some advantage, at times he would fling it to the winds and harshly condemn all who went to the meetings. This he seldom failed to do when a crowd of young people were gathered at the store. His criticisms served to intimidate them, which he knew would, in a measure, defeat the purposes of the meeting. Several times when the missionary stopped at the store the merchant would make statements by which he hoped to draw him into a discussion. But such had been studiously avoided. This also served to increase Keith's discomfort.

Each day during the week visits were made to the homes in the surrounding country. It

was a point with Haden Wilson to meet and talk with as many people as it was possible for him to do. And he always sought to get acquainted with the young men.

It was the season of the year in that country when the prairie hay was being cut and shipped to market, or housed in barns. The work required a large force, the greater number being young men. When Haden found a hay camp some time would be spent in meeting and getting acquainted with these young men. Several times during the week he rode with them to the barns or cars where the hay was stored or loaded for shipment. The fact that he would do that, and at noon, in the camp, take a tin plate loaded with food, a tin cup filled with water, and sit in a circle with the boys, eating as heartily as any of them, won for him an admiration and loyalty that not even Harry Keith could shatter with all his bitterness and intimidation. In the first week eighty-five visits were made to homes.

The Christian worker who goes into rural sections where there are no pastors and churches assumes a great responsibility, as well as enjoys a great opportunity to aid others. One of the opportunities is that of visiting in the homes of the people. In this phase of service the laborers soon become experts. This is especially

true in the rural districts where the people are not accustomed to receiving Christian workers. To go into a home where little or no attention is given to a religious life—and there are many such homes—say the right word, make those one meets feel glad that the worker came, and then leave before the visit becomes tiresome, is a delicate duty. It is to be regretted that this is a lost art with many good people who are seeking to work for Christ. Some feel that they are not called to that sphere of service, but the Apostle Paul, the prince of preachers, did not neglect “house to house visitation” as a most fruitful means of soul winning.

In every community a number of well-defined and similar conditions exist which not only claim the attention of the Christian workers, but all others as well who are laboring for the elevation of the people.

It is also a well-known fact that there is a striking similarity in those conditions in extensive regions of our country. It is true that some one condition may be more pronounced in a certain section than it is in a whole region, but there is, running through the whole, the similarity that is always noticeable to the close observer.

To illustrate this—in all that region of the state of Oklahoma, which was once known as

the Indian Territory of the five civilized tribes, the same destitution of religion and educational effort has for many years existed in the rural section, even where farming interests thrived. In the great black land belt of Texas this is also true. There, in many of the counties, from seventy to eighty per cent. of those who cultivate the land are tenants, renting from year to year. The owners make their homes in the towns and cities. Schools and churches do not thrive under such conditions. The mountain regions of north Arkansas and southwest Missouri furnish another illustration of this statement.

Haden Wilson made this observation early in his missionary life. The same general needs he found to be almost universal ; and so often came in touch with these, and similar demands, that he soon became an expert in sizing up a community, a family, and also the individual.

Some of the crying defects which the missionary had constantly observed in the rural districts were, on some farms, the constant application of grinding toil by every member of the family, with very little or no relief from the daily routine. There were no books and papers for the boys and girls ; meagre educational environments in the few months of the district schools ; and possibly no attention

given to the spiritual and religious side of life. Another was the great need of proper care of the homes. The water supply in many places was bad, full of germs, and allowed to continue so, year after year, as if forced upon the family by an inexorable law. The untidy, and to use terms which more fully describe what was meant, the dirty, filthy homes were, in the missionary's mind, one of the greatest barriers to the proper development of a wholesome manhood and womanhood in the country.

Dirt and filth fostered where they should not exist are out of harmony with every law of God. No home can fulfil its mission where these discordant elements exist. By repeated observations Haden Wilson gathered indisputable facts which showed a most striking difference in families—one grown up in a tidy, wholesome home, the other where dirt and filth hold sway. In the former is generally found well-cooked food, good books, papers, pictures and flowers. These are the natural accompaniments of the neat, orderly home. They create environments which are conducive to a higher degree of intellectual, moral and spiritual development. In the latter, the absence of these creates environments which are conducive to the smallest degree of intellectual and spiritual growth.

Before taking up the work at Modoc, Haden Wilson knew by abundant experience something of what he would encounter in going into all classes of houses; the poorest and also the well-to-do; but in this work he tried to use good sense. Because a home was uninviting was to him no excuse for passing it by. It might be—and a number of times he found it so—the very place where he might render aid. While he was anxious to save souls, he was not so narrow as to believe that such great work could only be done by always emphasizing Christ's claim on the people's lives. To those buffeted about by the hard conditions of the world, such talk is often foolish. The wise worker soon finds another way to deal with and win the despondent and indifferent characters. In this Haden Wilson was successful. In hard conditions people crave sympathy, the one thing seldom given. Contact with people who have within their souls an unselfish sympathy has many times served to drive away dark clouds and frequently despair. The missionary early learned this lesson in his missionary excursions.

In taking up the work at Modoc, he began by showing the people by his life and association that he sought to fill his Master's mission by "going about doing good." This was soon

realized in some of the most destitute homes on the outskirts of the community. In one he found a mother greatly afflicted, and arranged to aid her by explaining her destitution to some of the ladies attending the services, and they in turn gladly complied with his request. In a different direction, on the eastern border of the neighborhood, he found another destitute family. The father was greatly afflicted. Several times after the services the missionary visited the poor man and administered to his comfort by nursing and watching through the long vigils of the night. But death soon did its work.

One morning after the missionary had been in the Modoc country for some time he was told that a man, who lived some miles away, was dying. Briefly stated, the man was a rough character; like others, he had prided himself on defying God. He lived a reckless life and while still a young man, thirty-eight years of age, was dying.

The missionary set out at once with a friend to visit the home. He found it as distressing as his imagination could picture. The man was still in his right mind, but was expected to pass away at any moment. The family of young children, the weeping wife, and several friends were gathered about the sufferer. Two

stalwart, rugged men were on either side of the dying man when the missionary entered the home. The patient was appealing to them in turns to help him, and all that one would say was, "Be brave, Bill; hold a stiff upper lip." And then the dying man would exclaim in wild, wearied agony: "I'm lost, Jim! It won't do to die by." To this heart-rending wail, Jim would only say again, "Be brave, Bill; hold a stiff upper lip." With a wail, "I'm lost, Jim!" blended with the bitter sobs of his wife and children, his soul went out to meet its record in eternity.

After entering the room, the missionary made an effort to get the man's attention, but he could do so only for a moment. The thought of his being lost had such mastery of his mind that no other impression could be made.

The two friends who were seeking to comfort the dying man were those with whom he had covenanted to defy God, and demonstrated in death their faith by bravely meeting the issue. The first of the three to be summoned held out for a while, but as he approached the inevitable, his courage failed him and he died with the exclamation on his lips: "I'm lost, Jim; it won't do to die by."

CHAPTER IX

A STRUGGLE—THUS FAR AND NO FARTHER

LATER in the week Harry Keith grew less pronounced in his opposition to the missionary, and to the meeting. This was in a degree the result of his failure to create a feeling against either. It did not mean that he was any the less opposed to the work, or any less determined to silence the young missionary and send him out of the country with the condemnation of the people resting on him.

Early in the week he got word to his bootlegger friend to be at the store on Saturday, accompanied by a certain well-known character. So, early in the afternoon of that day the law-breaker was on hand in consultation with the merchant. The bootlegger had not failed to bring with him an abundant supply of his goods, and he was also accompanied by his companion, the well-known and wicked character. It was not unusual to see all these parties at Modoc, and therefore there was little suspicion of any unusual movement attached to their presence on that day. Late in the evening these men, with

Harry Keith as the central figure, held a secret caucus.

The people assembled at the schoolhouse that night as usual. The songs and prayers had become interesting features of each service. Uncle Bill Finley prayed as he had never been heard to do before. He confessed his own weakness with such humility that every one had a sympathetic feeling for him. His shortcomings were known to his neighbors ; yet, despite these everybody knew he had a good heart, and that he was moved by a sincere desire for a pure and more helpful life. His plea also that night for his tormentors, the scoffers, and those who boldly defied the word of God was such as to touch the boldest of them.

The song service, too, was more inspiring than usual. The missionary during the week had prevailed upon three of the young people, Ethel and Walter Holmes and Charlie Shoemaker, to join him in practicing a few special songs. One of them was, "Where Is My Boy To-night." With the aid of the leader the song had been fairly well prepared, and near the conclusion of that part of the service it was rendered by the quartette. Some strong, rough men in the congregation who had seen and witnessed much of the wicked side of life were moved to tears. The old Indian woman who occupied the same

seat that she selected the first night of the service was seen to brush the tears away as they trickled down her brown and withered cheeks.

The missionary followed the song service with a twenty-minute talk about lost boys whom he had found ; some had been saved, others had rejected the call to a better life.

During the week Haden Wilson had emphasized the importance of a Sunday-school. At this service he again dwelt upon its meaning to the community. The school was to be organized the following Sunday at nine-thirty in the morning.

The meeting closed. After consulting with several persons who had become attached to the missionary and also interested in the work, Haden, with these friends together, left the school building and walked to the store. It was suggested on the way that it was a surprise that the meeting was not disturbed. "Some of the worst characters in the country were at the store after dark," continued one of the party, "and all of them were drinking." When the missionary and his friends reached the store the same parties who had been referred to on the way were seen in the rear of the building, but did not show any inclination to recognize those who came in, although in former days they had consorted together as boon companions.

Harry Keith was more friendly toward the young man that evening than usual. Upon his entering he greeted him in a good-humored manner, stating that there was mail in the office for him. After delivering some letters and papers, he sought to enter into a conversation by asking about the meeting. He also stated that he understood that Mike Masters had been quite sick all the week, and asked the missionary if he knew how he was getting along.

"Mike has been a great sufferer this week," the young man replied.

"So I have understood," said the merchant.

"He was brutally treated last Saturday night," continued the young man.

"He deserves no mercy—a man who will starve his family as he has done should be beaten," replied the merchant in some heat.

"It is true," came back the young man, with a ringing emphasis in his voice, "he is a victim of his weakness and folly, but other men have no right to take advantage of them to gratify their own brutish natures."

This last statement was a thrust the merchant was not looking for. He saw clearly its meaning and knew that he had done just what the young man had boldly declared should not be done.

"That is the way with the world," replied

the merchant, after a moment's reflection. "All of us are preying upon each other. The weak has to give way to the strong. It's every fellow for himself, and that's the end of it."

The merchant's reply was made with a view of leading the young man into a controversy on one phase of his arguments with which he felt very much at home. He was thoroughly selfish and never tired of defending that sin by declaring that it was the way with the world.

The missionary saw at once his purpose. Looking at his watch he stated to the merchant that he would see him some other time, as he was under a promise to visit Mike that night.

This statement seemed to please Harry Keith so much that he was glad to drop the discussion.

"I hope you will find Mike better," he said in a tone that made one think of sounding brass.

The missionary and several others left the store, he going to his room to look over his mail. With that completed he left the home, closing the door behind him, and walked slowly to the gate, where he paused. Looking toward the store he saw that it was still open, judging from the dim light visible from the rear window. As he caught the faint rays of the flickering lamp the thought of Harry Keith

and his unreasonable opposition, and what it might mean to him, sent a chill through his body. After this short pause he walked down the road which led past the store on to Mike Masters' house.

Mike had not recovered from his last spree as it had been hoped he would, and as he had usually done in the past. The present visit was the third one the missionary had made that week.

Immediately after Haden Wilson and his friends had left the store there was a hurried consultation by the merchant and the men whom he had held in servile obedience during the last few hours. In a very short while these men left the store in haste, taking the road to the west, the same the missionary was to travel going to visit Mike.

The distance of three-quarters of a mile brought them to a section of the road which ran through a grove of timber. A tiny stream, fed by a spring, a short distance from the highway, threaded its way to the south through this timber and small undergrowth. Where it crossed the road a bridge had been constructed, the span rising more than ten feet above the rippling streamlet and extending some distance on either side.

During the summer there was a well-beaten

foot-path which left the main road not more than a quarter of a mile from the store. It wound its way through the small groves, on by the spring, under the bridge and beyond, and finally merged into the main road again some distance to the west. This path was the favorite way of all who went that direction traveling on foot, for it afforded shelter from the scorching rays of the sun, and freedom from the dust in that season of the year. It was nearer also, and the fact that it led by the spring was a consideration. While to go that path required the pedestrian to cross two fences or open two wire gates, they willingly did that for one or all the advantages it afforded over the main traveled road.

The band of men after leaving the store quickly made their way to this bridge, where all was dark and silent. The missionary, without knowing it, had given Harry Keith the information which he was most anxious to secure.

The merchant felt sure that he would take the path and they were to seize him as he passed under the bridge, rush away to some secret place where he was to be forced under the threats of severe punishment to agree to leave the country at once and not return. He was to be escorted on his way by the two char-

acters from Notava. These men were to see to it that he complied with every demand stipulated by Harry Keith.

The men, still under the influence of liquor, and eager for the work of dealing with their innocent victim, waited with some impatience for the time when they would surprise the missionary and by this one act put an end to the work that threatened the supremacy of the merchant's power, and also the destruction of the bootleggers' and gamblers' business.

After the service that night, several of the young people went from the schoolhouse to Uncle Bill Finley's home to spend a while in friendly gossip ; Ethel Holmes and her brother, Walter, were among them.

After remaining a short time the two started for their home. Walter was a young lad of sixteen years, and as he was ready to ride away in company with his sister he was called by some one of his companions. Ethel being familiar with the road, and not fearing the dark, gave her pony the reins and was soon out on the public road leading from the store to Mike Masters' home and on to the west. She was in a deep study and rode slowly and quietly, gazing at the moon which would soon disappear behind the hills to the west.

Before she reached the bridge the pony



ETHEL HOLMES AND HER PONY

showed some signs of uneasiness, shying to one side and continuing in a frightened state. Ethel tightened her bridle reins and brought him to a still slower walk. As the bridge was approached the horse's fright increased, he showing an unwillingness to cross it. This was so rare with the pony the rider knew that something unusual had happened or might happen. She stopped and listened. Her alert ear caught the sound of human voices which came from under the bridge. What it all meant at first she did not know, but remembering that the path led beneath the structure, her first conclusion was that the voices were those of her neighbors. And then remembering that Haden Wilson was to visit Mike that night her second conclusion was that it was the missionary and some friend on their way to the sick man's house.

Assuming that the latter surmise was correct, she waited for the parties to get from beneath the bridge, when she would continue on her journey. But they failed to move, and as she listened she detected a note of harshness that set her all alert. The pony, still frightened, refused to proceed. The rider leaned forward to listen, but could catch nothing but suppressed laughter and discordant sounds. And as they continued under the bridge she had the impres-

sion that it meant danger. Her quick perception soon discerned the whole truth. Like a flash it came into her mind that a band of desperate characters were at that moment waiting for Haden Wilson and would inflict upon him great violence. It was her next thought to save him from the mob. She was certain he would soon be on his way; if he had not already left the public road and turned into the path that led by the spring under the bridge.

The night was the 14th of August. The new moon was still shedding a dim golden light over the fields and prairies when Haden Wilson left his room and started to visit his friend Mike. A gentle breeze blew from the south. The russet blades of maturing corn waved a joyous welcome. The day had been hot; the mercury had gone up beyond the one hundred mark. But with the coming of the night all nature had conspired to atone for the discomforts of the day just closed.

The soul of Haden Wilson was attuned to the glad change and appropriated its share of peace and joy. He rejoiced in the hope of victory in sight for the cause to which he was unselfishly giving his life. He had noticed that evening, when he shook hands with a number of his congregation at the close of the service,

that there was a suppressed and anxious feeling manifest in their countenances. As he walked along the quiet way he reviewed much of the week just passed. Without knowing it, he dwelt upon the almost pathetic look of Ethel Holmes as she took his hand that night. His mind lingered upon her searching and beautiful eyes, and as he did so a new symphony began to vibrate in his soul. Just how long this new found joy was allowed to live he never knew. But when he came to himself, and realized the spell and its charms, for the first time during many months he found he had allowed human love to take precedence over his Master's business. He was startled, and laid a firm hand, as it were, on himself and said, "Thus far and no farther."

There were several reasons why Haden Wilson so rudely suffocated this response of his soul to that of Ethel Holmes. The first, and only one that may be recorded here, was that back some years before, prior to his entering the missionary service, he had bound himself with a compact to which, up to that time, there was no key. It made no difference how the soul might beat against its prison bars, it was bound and chained as firmly by this compact as was Prometheus bound to his horrible fate.

Ethel was a bright and beautiful girl of eighteen years. Her life on the farm was conducive to a perfect and well-developed body, good health and a wholesome temperament. She was an expert in horseback riding. It was common for her to join in the wolf chase; in a number of heated contests she had won the laurels. A ride of ten or fifteen miles across the prairies, to transact business for her father, or to visit a friend, was a matter of small consequence to Ethel.

She had a good mother, and while the family had been denied much that adds to spiritual and educational development, the mother, though pressed with a multitude of duties, was not indifferent to the proper moral training of her children. The coming of the missionary had encouraged her, and aided Ethel to understand more fully something of the Christian life; but as yet she had made no public acknowledgment of her faith.

That night as the full meaning of the danger to which Haden Wilson was exposed flashed through Ethel's mind, she came near swooning and falling to the ground. The thought that she might not be able to save him was excruciating. If he had already left the road, and was on his way following the path, she saw how hopeless it would be to reach him before he

was in the hands of the mob. As the full significance of it all came to her she turned her pony, facing the way she had come, and reached her hand out into the pale moonlight as it found its way among the giant and silent trees ; Ethel for the first time in her life realized what destinies a few moments might hold. At all hazard she must save him ; but she knew quick action was required. With this one thought dominating every fibre of her being, she was not long in throwing herself into the work.

Her pony, too, seemed to understand all that its rider discerned, for with a signal from Ethel he rushed back over the road as if he knew some great destiny was held in the space of a moment, and that moment depended on his speed.

The distance was not far—only a half mile—and yet to Ethel it seemed an age before she reached the point where the familiar path left the road. When it was reached she stopped and cast an anxious and searching look over the prairie in the direction of the grove of timber, through which she knew the path wound its way. But there was no one in sight. Perhaps, she reasoned, he is beyond the grove, and to reach him before he arrives at the bridge is uncertain. It would be necessary for her to dismount and open two gates ; that would

cause delay. It may be, she again reasoned, that he has not yet left his room ; but to wait, or go farther on toward the store to ascertain if that were true, would each moment lessen her chances to save him from the mob if he had really passed into the timber. "What shall I do?" she almost cried out, with her anxious gaze fixed on the road toward the store.

At that moment a lone figure came into view. The relief and joy that came to her at the sight of it, for she knew it was the missionary, again almost overwhelmed her. Calling to her command all her self-control, she waited for him to come up.

Haden Wilson was much surprised to see a lone figure, particularly a woman, on a pony in the road before him. All his plans and the glory of the night were forgotten. He knew it meant something unusual. As he came near he recognized Ethel.

"Why, Ethel! why are you here?" he exclaimed.

"To save you from the hands of the mob." And she quietly related all she knew.

"I am sure you are right, Ethel. I saw those men to-night and have been wondering what had become of them."

"You must not go ; you won't go, will you?" she pleaded in a trembling and choking tone.

"You are a brave girl, Ethel, and I must listen to you ; but," he paused, "what must I do?"

"You must not go," was her reply.

"Ethel, I will go with you, and we together will cross the bridge."

She paused. She thought of being with him at the scene of danger and a thrill of joy surged through her soul—if they had to face the worst she could share it with him.

"All right," she said more cheerfully. "If you will let me go right along with you all the way to Mike's house."

"You may do that, my dear girl," and the missionary felt the new joy again beat against the prison bars.

Ethel alighted from her faithful pony and, gathering up the reins in one hand, she and the missionary took their way down the road which she had rushed over only a few moments before. When the bridge was reached the pony was still uneasy, but did not refuse to follow. The missionary and his companion walked slowly across the bridge, and as they did so Haden was charmed more than ever with the bravery and marked self-possession which Ethel commanded. After crossing they paused to listen. The same discordant sounds could be heard, and both knew that it was the mob. The home of Mike

Masters was soon reached, and Ethel, bidding the young man good-night, mounted her pony to ride away to her home. She refused to allow the missionary to accompany her.

"I can outrun the whole bunch," she laughingly said, "but it isn't me they want."

Before riding away, however, she paused as she started to bid him good-night, and then said, "You will stay all night with Mike, won't you?" It was the same pleading, anxious tone, and the missionary knew full well what it meant.

"I will stay till morning, Ethel. I will not give them a chance to get me."

"Good-night," she said, and rode away at a swift gallop.

CHAPTER X

THE FIRST SUNDAY-SCHOOL IN MODOC

SUNDAY morning brought with it the promise of a beautiful day. But the minds of many of the citizens of Modoc were not in harmony with the lovely promise. What had been attempted the night before was soon known throughout the vicinity. As the full significance of the purpose of the mob dawned upon the minds of the people, some became indignant. Other facts than those which Ethel Holmes and the missionary knew developed during the night. The men, after waiting some time for their victim, became very impatient, drank heavily, and soon lost the discretion necessary to guard their secret—the dark mission which might end in murdering an innocent man. The desperadoes' disappointment resulting from the failure to apprehend their prey was so great that it culminated in a disagreement among themselves. A fight ensued in which some of the men were unmercifully beaten.

Harry Keith was notified of the failure and also of the fight which served as an exhaust for

the concentrated villainy of the outlaws. While he again felt outraged at the results, the merchant knew that it would not do to abandon his men. So when they made their way back to the store he took charge of those who had suffered most in the battle under the bridge and called the doctor to administer to their miserable plight. Those coming from N—— he arranged to send away, for he understood that there might come a limit to the patience of the people toward such vile characters.

The citizens in discussing the matter that morning at the post-office expressed the belief that the time had come when such attempts at mob violence should stop. Some stated that while they did not take much stock in the work and plans of the missionary, yet they were willing to stand for a change in the community ; but no definite plans resulted from the discussions of the events of the night before. Strong indignation, however, was expressed toward Harry Keith, whom it was generally believed was at the head of the whole affair. But that citizen was nowhere to be seen. The store remained closed during the entire day.

After it was found that no definite plans would be formulated to vindicate the missionary, the matter was gradually dropped by those who had gathered at the store with the under-

standing that they would attend the services and hear what the young man would have to say ; for they felt that such an affair, one so vitally concerning him, would not pass unnoticed by the missionary.

By nine o'clock there was a bevy of children gathered at the schoolhouse. Some of them were quite timid and reserved. Their little shy faces and shabby clothes were mute appeals to Haden Wilson. To him they were eloquent witnesses of the homes from which the children came.

Gentle reader, have you ever stood before an assembly of children gathered from the homes which make the community, in the city, town, hamlet or the remotest districts, and studied them as the interpreters of their homes ? It is here that the trained worker for the uplifting of humanity can make his observations which may be relied on as surely reflecting the characters of the homes relative to intellectual development and moral and religious culture, as can the sailor by his observation of the stars determine his position on the high seas.

Since it was Haden Wilson's special mission to labor in the most destitute sections, he applied himself with great care to the study of the people, and especially so as touching their intellectual, moral and spiritual environment.

By numerous tests he found where a community or section of long standing had neglected religious culture that there was a corresponding lack of intellectual development. He also found, by facts gathered from a number of communities in which the agricultural lands were equal in fertility if not superior to others which he had selected for comparison, that where the spiritual culture of the children was neglected the leading citizens were careless of their religious obligations ; the church and Sunday-school were regarded with great indifference ; there were fewer well-kept homes and farms ; the public schools were of inferior grade, and the public roads were of the poorest type.

It was further discovered that of those who were prosecuted for crimes in the courts in the counties where these investigations were made, that the communities which neglected the religious training of the children furnished ninety per cent. more of the criminals than those where it was sought properly to train them. This was found to be true, although the latter communities contained a larger population than the former. These facts had been burned, as it were, into the life of Haden Wilson, since in a number of instances he had been forced to witness the consequences of such awful neglect.

On one of the missionary excursions he went into a cabin where there were six children. All surroundings were repulsive, but the parents seemed oblivious to what such a condition meant to them or to their children. Neither father nor mother read books or papers—there were none in the home—and manifested no interest in God's word nor the religious or the intellectual culture of their children.

In this home there was a girl sixteen years of age. She was a stepdaughter to the man. The girl was well developed physically for one of her years, yet she was very indifferent to her untidy appearance. She was asked by the missionary if she had a Bible. Her reply was "No," but she stated, "I want to go to school and learn to read, so I can get one." This girl and the other children appeared eager to join the Sunday-school which was to be organized only two miles from their home, but the parents gave them no encouragement.

These and many other experiences had made a deep impression on Haden Wilson's life and served to increase his efforts in trying to bring an uplifting message to every community and to impress upon the child life a lasting picture of the beautiful and good. Fully mindful of his responsibility, it was with no small degree of interest that he looked into the faces of the

young people and children of Modoc on that Sunday morning. "While I may," he often said, "reform to a degree some of the lives of the adults, it is the lives of the children I want to form in harmony with the beautiful and good."

The eager faces and bright eyes were an eloquent welcome to the missionary as he faced them to open the service. All the children were soon sure that they had in him a friend, and their timidity was soon forgotten.

The first act of the missionary, after a short prayer, was to unfold a picture and place it where every one could see it. The picture was a large and attractive one—that of the Saviour blessing the little ones. He told the story how he then loved little children, and of his great love for them at the present time. The talk was brief and he closed by asking how many wanted a Sunday-school where all could learn about such a Saviour and Friend. Every one present lifted a hand.

It had been one of the missionary's special purposes during the week to find a suitable person for superintendent. He had also been careful to look for those who were fitted for teachers. This is one of the most difficult tasks of the Sunday-school missionary. In fact, to secure competent teachers and officers is the

greatest problem in any Sunday-school, even in those where there are many consecrated Christians. When the reader understands this he or she is better prepared to appreciate the many embarrassing difficulties the Sunday-school worker is forced to meet and overcome in the rural districts where there has not been, perhaps in many years, any special effort given to such training.

The missionary had been careful to complete his list of officers and teachers. None of them, however, were trained workers, but each one had been selected with a hope of their being developed into a reasonable degree of efficiency.

When the vote was taken favoring the Sunday-school, Haden Wilson was ready to proceed at once to the organization. The officers were not arbitrarily chosen by him. Some of the people had been consulted as to the fitness of those he had listed. With very little preliminaries he proceeded to the selection of the superintendent and other officers. Names had been previously suggested and were now voted on by the school.

Following the election of officers came the arranging of classes. Four had been planned. For that purpose those of certain ages were divided into groups. For each class the missionary suggested the name of a teacher,

which was readily accepted. While this method of arranging classes according to the ages of the pupils may not be the best, Haden Wilson had found it to be the most satisfactory in his work. It is proper to follow some such method until the school can be properly graded. It can be readily understood that in the country where the people have had no experience in such work the missionary had good reasons for assuming so much. The responsibility of the whole rested upon him. He possessed large experience ; had studied the local conditions, and was better fitted to direct the organization than any one else.

After the organization of the Sunday-school, arrangements were made for literature, Bibles, song-books, papers for the children, and a library. The latter the missionary insisted upon, and donated half the price of thirty volumes.

Mrs. Holmes, Ethel's mother, was selected for the superintendent. It had been found by the missionary that she was held in high esteem by all her neighbors and was regarded as a consecrated Christian by those who had thought on the subject. Without any suggestion whatever on the part of the missionary in the canvass to find a suitable person for superintendent, her name was more often mentioned than all others combined. With these assurances of the con-

fidence of her neighbors, the missionary placed the matter before Mrs. Holmes, whom he had already found to be an intelligent lady and one who also enjoyed a Christian experience. At first she could not bring herself to the point of accepting the responsibility, but after two days of reflection and prayer, she agreed to take up the work. On that morning she was present, ready to make some sacrifice of her home duties for the sake of others. Her daughter, Ethel, was elected to serve as secretary and treasurer.

The missionary placed in the hands of each officer and teacher a small book, the title of which was, "The Sunday-School—How to Start and Keep It." Lesson supplies for the remainder of the quarter and picture cards were furnished each of the scholars. The latter greatly delighted the smaller children, as their sparkling eyes indicated.

All this work was accomplished in a comparatively short time. Every one present entered heartily into the plans. A good start had been made and the school dismissed at ten minutes before eleven o'clock.

The eleven o'clock service was well attended, the house being comfortably filled. More citizens than usual were present. Some, however, were not there with a view of being benefited,

but with the expectation of hearing the missionary arraign Harry Keith and his intended mob violence. But in this they were disappointed.

The song service was much better than usual ; the week's training had resulted in much improvement. After the second song had been rendered, Mr. Webb, who had stated that morning that he did not take much stock in the young man's work, showed surprise as he leaned over and whispered to his neighbor, Sharp, "I did not know that they were learning to sing so well. I am proud of our girls and boys."

"I should say so," replied Mr. Sharp. "All they need is a chance ; but we are just beginning to see that since Mr. Wilson came."

The Scripture lesson was from Luke 16 : 19-31, the story of Lazarus and the lost rich man. When the reading of the lesson was completed, and the missionary faced his audience to present his message, he never felt before so completely his own weakness. There were lost men before him, and it was the missionary's first chance to bring them the message of salvation. He was almost helpless in the face of so great a responsibility. In that moment he paused and mentally said, "Lord, the work is all thine. I am in myself powerless. Help me." He was conscious that his message must be simple and also convincing.

As he proceeded to relate the story of the lost man in his own language, there came to him a fuller meaning of what the Master meant, and with it increased power to present it. In his application of the lesson, a more powerful vision of the lost gripped him than he had ever known before.

The missionary's intense interest won the people. Those who heard him for the first time were amazed at his words, as he pictured the doomed man in eternity with no plea to justify himself. "We do not know what were all the sins of the rich man," he exclaimed, "but we do know that he refused to acknowledge God, and for that sin he went to the place of torment.

"If you, my friends, are guilty of that sin to-day you are lost already as surely as that man was lost."

"My God!" exclaimed a voice in the congregation.

"But there is a difference. The door of hope was shut against the rich man. While you are lost, the door of hope has not been closed against you. Christ is still seeking you, as did the loving shepherd his lost lamb. If you accept Christ you are saved. He must be first in your heart, your home, your business. When that is true there will be no longer plot-

ting against innocent men; drunken revelries will be unknown; your young men will be saved from dissipation and blaspheming against God, and the intimidation of those who believe on his name will cease."

Young Wilson knew this moment was a crisis in the lives of some present. Following a brief pause, he continued: "As many as feel that they are lost, but who want to be saved from the punishment described by the Saviour of men, I will ask them to stand up." The congregation arose almost as one man. Webb and Sharp were among the first to stand. All faced the missionary in silence; some with blanched faces. "Those who feel that they cannot save themselves, but will trust in Jesus Christ for salvation, I will ask you, while we sing, to give me your hand as an evidence of your willingness to trust him." "Just As I Am" was started by the missionary. He was joined at once by those who had seats near the organ. This phase of the service was introduced with hardly a pause, the missionary still retaining control of the congregation. The old Indian woman was the first to respond, but instead of kneeling, she took her stand near the missionary and looked steadily out over her neighbors. There was a tremor on her lips, and tears were in her eyes. The missionary

pleaded with the people as the song proceeded ; others came ; a few were overwhelmed with deep conviction and could not face the congregation, but knelt where they were, giving themselves up to weeping. Plea after plea was made for the men to decide, but with ashen faces the most of them held back. The missionary sang the first verse of "All To Jesus I Surrender." At its close he said to those kneeling, "While we sing these lines again I want you to make them your prayer, and if you can surrender your life to him rise and give me your hand. If there are others out there in the congregation who can surrender all, do it now."

When the chorus was reached, Ethel Holmes, who had been singing, gave the missionary her hand, saying, "I surrender all." Her face was radiant with the new joy. The old Indian woman was moved, and the two were in each other's arms. Others arose from their knees, and as they did so a great burden seemed to roll away, and there was rejoicing and gladness in their voices. The missionary still pleaded with those in the congregation to come. The chorus was repeated again and again while he stood with outstretched arms pleading for the men to surrender, but they would not.

The service closed, and the missionary with

many others went away with heavy hearts. True he rejoiced that some accepted Christ, but he knew that men had been moved upon by the Holy Ghost to give up their sinful ways. That they would not do it gave the devil another chance to force them farther away, and maybe to open opposition. Also the refusal of older men to acknowledge Christ definitely served to keep back those who were much younger.

CHAPTER XI

THE OLD INDIAN WOMAN

THAT afternoon following the meeting at the schoolhouse the missionary called on the old Indian woman and inquired what she meant by taking the stand she did at the services that morning. In response she replied : " Me want to be Christian."

" Do you mean that you fully surrender to Christ, and that your sins are forgiven ? "

" Me did."

" Since you have done that how do you feel ? " he asked, knowing it was a test question, and he was sure that she would give an honest answer.

" Me feel better," came a ready response.

" How do you feel better ? " he asked.

" Me do not want to do things me did."

" What things ? "

" Me do not want cuss. Me want do things for Lord Jesus Christ," and placing her hand over her heart, she said, " Peace, rest."

That testimony was given in no tone of doubt, and her black, piercing eyes, glowing with peace and joy, were enough to convince the missionary that she had been born again. He knew

that an unlettered woman sixty years of age could not and would not feign such a change.

Another instance in which a deaf and unlettered Indian showed the remarkable power and leading of the Holy Spirit made a vivid and lasting impression on Haden Wilson. The name of the Indian was Miller. He was forty years of age. His lot had been a hard one, resulting largely from the loss of his hearing in childhood. Although he still, to a limited degree, retained and used his voice, his manner of communication was generally by physical signs, but he had learned partly to interpret the speech of others by the movement of their lips. In this he sometimes surprised his associates by his accurate interpretations. Miller had no knowledge of books, having never learned to read. At the time the missionary first visited Modoc he was living with a family whose home was not more than a mile from the schoolhouse, earning his board and a small payment of money by aiding in the numerous duties incident to farm life. The family was kind to him and he generally came with them to the services at the schoolhouse. He always took a seat near the missionary and appeared to be as deeply interested in every phase of the service as if he could hear and understand all that was said. The missionary noted this interest and often showed his appreciation

of Miller's presence by some mark of kindness. At one time the missionary mentioned the manifest interest of the Indian to Mr. and Mrs. Jones, in whose home he was staying. They, too, had observed it. As a further evidence of his interest, Mrs. Jones mentioned the fact that he was always anxious to get the family started to the services. That they might do so he often assisted by doing an extra amount of chores about the place. But the fact that he could not read and was also deaf had led the parties to conclude that his interest was prompted by the social feature which the meeting afforded, and with this conclusion the matter was dismissed.

One evening, during the second week of the meeting, the missionary took supper with the family in whose home Miller was staying. As his custom was, Haden Wilson left near sundown to walk alone to the schoolhouse. The best and nearest way to reach this was a foot-path which led across the prairie through a pasture. The sun had just set—the golden west had never appeared more glorious. As the twilight gathered over the prairie the missionary hurried along the path, deeply absorbed in his plans for the service. Looking ahead, he was surprised to see at some distance beyond his Indian friend Miller.

He was standing in the path with his face

turned to the west, apparently contemplating its glory and beauty. While the missionary knew that the person in the path before him was Miller, yet his appearance was so strange and unusual the young man stopped short to contemplate his striking figure. The lone Indian, as he stood like a statue gazing into the golden west, brought back to the missionary the memory of his boyhood days when he had committed to memory and declaimed in the little country school, "The Lone Indian—His Last Appeal to the White Man." But to pause and rush back over the past years, to days free from care, was only for a moment. That which tempted his imagination was a subject for artists and poets and not for a missionary whose life was crowded with sterner things. He hastened on to meet the Indian, who turned from his contemplation of distant scenes and looked steadily at Haden Wilson as he came near.

"Hello, Jim," the missionary said, extending his hand, which was clasped warmly by Miller. Continuing to hold the young man's hand, he said: "Me want be baptized."

This statement greatly surprised young Wilson. He was also perplexed since he could not communicate with the man before him.

"Others be baptized; me want be baptized."

The missionary's perplexity grew, but sud-

denly remembering that Miller could understand to a degree the movements of the lips, he gently placed one hand on his shoulder, and touching his lips with the other, said : " Do you love Jesus ? "

" Me do," came a ready response, and placing one hand on his breast the Indian continued, " Me love Jesus." Moving his hand from his breast to his eyes, covering them, he said, " Blind." Then waving his hand toward the west, he exclaimed, " Now me see ! "

To the missionary these signs and words meant " I was blind, but now I see."

The young man was greatly moved at what he discovered, and standing close to Jim in the gathering twilight, said slowly : " I will baptize you."

The Indian indicated clearly that he understood, and again placing his hand on his breast, said : " Heap good, heap good."

CHAPTER XII

VICTORY AND FAILURE

THE services on Sunday night were more largely attended than any thus far held. A number from adjoining communities were there for the first time. Every available space in the little schoolhouse was filled. The song service was again entered into with a good will. After singing several selections the missionary announced that he would give a few minutes to Scripture quotations, insisting on all to respond by repeating a verse from the Bible or Testament. This had been done several times before, and a number now readily arose and repeated verses from the Bible. This phase of the service had also become so interesting that some of the roughest men of the neighborhood repeated Scripture quotations with evident satisfaction. The missionary had noted this growing interest and sought to encourage it. He had repeated several times at the beginning of the service the First and Twenty-third Psalms, and had the people to follow him in concert. In

this way quite a number had learned both. At this service the Psalms were repeated with a greater degree of willingness than had formerly been shown. All who took part arose to their feet.

When Hugh Crane arose there was a degree of merriment shown by some in the congregation. In his efforts to rise there was a disturbance sufficient to destroy the solemnity of an average congregation, but when he felt fully sure that he was on his feet his first performance was forgotten in what followed. Hugh Crane was the owner of a voice of immense volume. It was declared by his neighbors that he had been heard five miles when calling hogs. In ordinary conversation he had never practiced the art of subduing his vocal organs to an average conversational tone, and when excited it at once leaped to a high key, with volume in proportion. On the present occasion his composure was somewhat disturbed, as he proceeded in a voice that startled those who did not fully understand what might be expected. He began: "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He leadeth me through his still waters, he maketh me lie down in his cool shades," ending with an emphasis on cool shades that made one think of Texas blizzards.

The congregation was amused. Several knew

that the quotation was not right ; others understood that something was wrong, but did not know what, and amid the smiles of the congregation Hugh Crane took his seat with no less disturbance than when he arose.

During this same service another quotation was given which amused the missionary. Two citizens sat side by side ; one of them had given a Scripture quotation ; the other was evidently anxious to say something, but could not recall a statement from the Bible, as the missionary judged from his looks. He leaned over to his friend and said something. The friend answered back by whispering in his ear. It was no doubt a proper quotation as he thought. Then he arose and said : " Be sure you are right, then go ahead."

There was nothing unusual by way of a disturbance in the services that followed. A strong appeal was made for men to decide for Christ. Several came forward to the front for prayer, but others, whose appearance showed that they were struggling to resist the Spirit, held back. The same parties were present who attended the morning services and listened eagerly to every word of the preacher, but they would not move.

One man said to the missionary at the close : " I know I am a bad man, but as long as you

pray for me as you do, I feel like I will not be lost."

One interesting feature of the meeting that night was the response of Mrs. Harry Keith and her two daughters to the request that every one who wanted to take a definite stand for Christ to come forward and take their places on the little platform. Mrs. Keith appeared very determined and stated to the missionary at the close of the service that she had fully decided to do her duty. Her daughters appeared to be as determined as their mother.

The fact that the mother and daughters attended the meeting caused a disturbance in the home. Harry Keith stormed and raged, but with all he could say and do, he could not keep his family from attending the services.

Mrs. Keith was an intelligent woman, one-eighth Indian. Her two daughters, young ladies eighteen and twenty years of age, had spent several years in the Tribal Seminary at Tahlequah and also were intelligent, and possessed a degree of culture that was far beyond that of the average young lady of that section. In discussing the matter of attending the services, and fully becoming a Christian, Mrs. Keith had made it clear to her husband that while she was glad to coöperate with him in most instances, she would not allow him to dictate

to her as to religious matters, and then proceeded to do what she felt was her religious duty. All that Keith could do was to rail at the missionary and the meeting. He had learned by sad experience that it was better for him to respect the wishes of his wife, but that did not go to the extent of altogether stopping his vile and blasphemous utterances against the Bible, the missionary and the present meeting. However, on Monday it was clear that he had decided not to show his aggressive opposition so definitely as he had the last few days.

The meeting was the general topic for conversation with those who gathered at the store on Monday morning. Nothing like it had been known in that section. It also had the good effect to encourage a number of men to come out definitely and declare their belief in the Bible and their faith in religion.

These men had for years been intimidated by Harry Keith's bold and aggressive stand against both. In doing so, that is, in taking such a stand, more than one citizen experienced great relief. During the week the discovery was made that several citizens of the community, before moving from their native states—some from Tennessee, others from Missouri and Arkansas—were members of some church and lived reasonably consecrated and religious lives

in their earlier days. Why they did not continue their allegiance to their Master and church is well known to every Christian worker in the great Southwest. The homeseekers go into the new regions to open up farms and build their homes, and the toil is so great and such a heavy tax upon their mental and physical powers that many lose sight of their spiritual obligations. While they who move to new countries know the need of religious training, for themselves and also for their children, they are very largely disqualified on account of the manifold duties incident to building their new homes. The lack of organization and intelligent ministers as leaders result in the loss of interest on the part of the citizens, and the children grow up without any training along the line of Christian effort.

While our churches see this situation, it is seen through a glass darkly. They have looked at it, but their money, energy and brains have been absorbed in other fields. When the church comes really to understand this great question we term "Home Missions," see it face to face, and is moved by the prospect of such a wonderful opportunity, then it will be that the real work of winning this nation and the world for Christ will begin.

The interest in the meeting continued ; early

in the week the missionary decided that he would make Wednesday evening the decision service, and planned everything to that end. For several days a large number of young men had attended regularly. They were already convinced that they should give up a life of sin. In private conversation with the missionary they did not hesitate to say as much. The greatest sins of these young men were profanity, gambling, and drunkenness ; the most of them would occasionally get drunk and some would gamble. To reach them on that night the missionary was concentrating all his powers. But he did not know that other influences were at work to defeat all that he might do.

When Haden Wilson went to the school-house on Wednesday evening he was surprised to see so few of the young men present. Parties to whom he spoke about their absence were also surprised, and could not account for it, unless it was that the bootleggers had returned. Young Wilson was greatly depressed at that surmise. He had counted on winning a great victory in that service, and to have his plan spoiled by the cunning devices of such lawless men distressed and discouraged him. If he failed, he would lose much, and the devil, and those in the community who rejoiced to see the devil win, would gain a great victory. The

missionary reproached himself for not spending the day in closer personal touch with the young men. But at that hour it was too late. If the wicked one was abroad in the community, sowing his seed, he had by that time found his victims. Besides, at that moment, Wilson had no idea where the young men were. He had noticed as he came by the store that it seemed deserted. The service proceeded at the proper time, but it was lacking in the buoyancy that had marked all the former meetings.

The missionary was not the only one who felt that there was something wrong. As Ethel Holmes took her place by the organ she said she felt like some of their sheep were lost, and that she would like to go out and hunt them. The suggestion that the boys had gone somewhere to engage in a drunken carousal was believed by all. By the time the service had advanced to the beginning of the sermon a young man, who had been faithful in his attendance at all the meetings, came in and whispered to his nearest friend that he had just left the boys at the old Barnett house.

The missionary devoted twenty minutes to his talk in which he took up the theme of the lost lamb. At the close he emphasized the fact that the shepherd did not abuse his lamb or talk ugly to it when he found it. "Jesus was

always kind and patient with his erring children. He wants to win them back when they go wrong, but not by harsh means."

The talk was touching. It proceeded from a full heart and it found its way to others who felt the same burden. All knew what was on the mind and heart of the missionary, and some present felt such pity for him that they wept when he poured out his heart in prayer at the close for the boys and young men.

After the congregation was dismissed it was learned that a barrel of bottled beer had been delivered at an old vacant house one mile east of the store and about the same distance from the tank. Tickets for free beer had been quietly passed around to the boys during the day.

It had been the custom of many in the community who drank to buy a quantity of such goods and collect at a convenient place and drink, gamble, and often fight. For the past ten days there had been little drinking, and each day a number were getting farther away from the habit. On the Saturday before the refusal of some to drink and others to buy was the handwriting on the wall.

Harry Keith conceived a new plan to carry out his opposition. It was to give the boys a free spread, as he called it, consisting of beer,

some stale cheese and fruit. The beer, and also the spread, were mentioned in such tempting and confidential way that it appealed to the appetites of all those who had not become teetotalers. Some, it is true, had fully decided to give up the habit; however, the social gathering had been such a common thing in the community, especially the beer drinking, that many of the young men decided to go, not thinking nor understanding fully what it all meant; that it was a scheme of Harry Keith's to destroy the effects of the missionary's work.

The boys were there, the beer flowed freely. It was not long before its effects were felt. Bitter oaths were handed about. As the beer disappeared, violent discussions arose—much of it about the missionary and the meeting. Both were condemned by some. Others stoutly defended each.

An improvised platform was erected. As names were called the party was expected to appear on the platform and make a speech. If he failed to do so he was fined the sum of one dollar. This sum was to go to the beer fund. Some responded and others refused. Still others tried, but failed, because of one of two things—either too much beer or not sufficient knowledge. The fines were collected. By the time the beer was consumed the crowd was

boisterous and could be heard a mile away. Bad tempers were developing in not a few. Violent language was used freely, and a general fight was close at hand. That was soon brought on between Jake Smith and Pete Jones. Others took up the quarrel, each defending his man as champion. An all round fight was on, and soon the whole room was a seething, cursing, bleeding humanity. Some were sober enough to find the door and escape. The fight ended and the crowd dispersed. Many of them left the cabin and the scene of their debauchery with skinned noses, black eyes and bleeding faces.

The next morning Harry Keith was greatly rejoiced. He gloated over the reports of the spread. He would exclaim: "That fixes the preacher. I guess he will find he will have to go." Addressing a crowd, he said several times: "Now you boys can see his preaching is all bosh; it won't stick when there is beer in sight," and then he would laugh boisterously.

Many of the boys did not let themselves be seen the following day. Those who went out bore ample marks of what had happened the night before. The few that the missionary was able to find showed embarrassment. But he swept everything aside and let them know that they were missed at the service, also that they

were wanted back. The next day, Friday, he managed to see and talk with quite a number of them. That night more were present, but others were still out.

On Saturday morning three of the boys came to the missionary as a committee, representing a number of others, and stated that they were sorry for what they had done. "Before that night," they said, "it had not occurred to us how bad it was to engage in such conduct. We know you are here to help us, and we feel that we have not treated you right, and we want to ask your pardon for all the boys."

The gentlemanly statement was gladly accepted and the boys were assured that it was a manly step. He again insisted on all of them coming back to the services.

CHAPTER XIII

THE LAMBS AND THE WOLVES

THE following Sunday was the missionary's last day in this community. His anxiety about the result grew each hour. He was on his guard to shield the boys against the bootlegger, should he again come into the community. He planned to get information as to whether or not he was expected to return. Ed Crockett, one of the men whom he felt that he could trust, was sent to Harry Keith to make inquiry if there would be anything on Saturday or Sunday. Without being suspected by the merchant he was told that two of the bootleggers would reach the store about five o'clock Saturday evening. The missionary was almost horrified at the news. He knew if more beer and liquor were distributed that he would lose a number of the boys and men he hoped to win. What should he do? There were no officers he could trust.

Without explaining his plans he decided to take a risk. He would go out and meet the men and make a personal appeal to them. If

they would not hear him and return, he planned to buy the stuff; if they refused, what would then follow he had not the slightest idea. But he would save the boys if it was in his power.

That afternoon some young men met at the store. They received the important news that the bootleggers would arrive about five o'clock with the latest and best brands of beer, furnished by the Kansas City breweries. It was to be free and would be distributed at the store about eight o'clock.

Some of them were not altogether pleased with the news. They felt that it was another direct challenge to them. It was a test as to which side they would line up with.

Distributing beer at the store, especially to the boys, was common. But there had never been any defined plan of opposing the practice. To the average young man, it appeared that he was expected to go with the crowd, and he generally did. But now there was well-defined opposition, and these same young men saw that they were to put themselves on record—to line up with one side or the other. The day was hot and they had left the store and taken seats under the shade of a tree at the back of the building, some thirty yards west.

Clarence Bush, a foreman at one of the hay camps, who was looked upon as a leader among

the young men and who was always at the front in every kind of gathering, the socials, dances and smokes, was one of the number to gather under the shade tree. It was said that Bush was a very successful gambler. While it was not published from the housetops, it was the common talk of the neighborhood that he beat Harry Keith only two Sunday nights before the appearance of the missionary in a game of poker for fifty dollars, and was so cold blooded that he picked up the money and refused to play any further.

"I know Mr. Wilson is right," said young Bush in a general discussion of the situation, "but we young fellows would have a hard fight to live up to what he teaches. If we fail to join the drinking crowd to-night they will cut us out; or at least Harry Keith will never quit laughing at us. But it looks like a mean and cowardly thing to do, to desert Mr. Wilson at this time."

"Yes, it is," broke in Charlie Dodge. "But if we fail to be at the smoke to-night they will accuse us of lining up with the preaching crowd. Next week Mr. Wilson will be gone and we will not have the preaching crowd to run with. I know what they will say. Harry Keith will never quit asking all kinds of fool questions."

"Yes, I heard the old cuss ask Ethel Holmes

when she called for mail this morning, 'what she would do when the meeting closed and the preacher was gone,'” said Harvey Brooks. “Then he laughed.”

“The old cuss,” responded McCooly. “I wish she had slapped him in the mouth.”

“She ought to, but she didn’t. Her face turned red and she said she was going to help save the children from his wicked ways,” said Harvey.

“Good!” exclaimed a chorus of voices. “That sounds like Ethel. But, the poor girl, won’t she have a hard time with such cowards as we are?” added Clarence Bush.

“That she will, but she’s got the nerve,” said another member of the crowd.

“I hain’t never been much in living good; I’ve gone with the crowd as I did last Wednesday night,” and the speaker rubbed his hand over his right eye, which had been hit with a beer bottle. It was still closed and as black as crêpe. The speaker was Ed Crockett. “I have known one thing a long time; that it is always best to stand for the right thing,” continued Ed. “I hain’t always done it, but I know it’s the best,” and there was a pause. “Our old school-teacher back in the little log schoolhouse in Tennessee used to talk to us boys about standing for the right,” the same voice

continued. "He used to tell us what David Crockett would do, and I'll bet he would do it too," another pause following. "He used to tell us that one of David's first sayings was, 'Be sure you are right, then go ahead.'"

"It will be a fight that will try our mettle if we stay by the preacher to-night," said Bert Redecker. "We are all cowards. If we go to-night we will also go to-morrow, and in that time, if we stay sober, we will line up with the preacher. I know a lot of you boys can do it, and I hope you will. But it will be a hard fight."

"There will be some who will stand with Mr. Wilson anyway," again remarked Clarence Bush. "Fred Holmes was always a nice, quiet boy. He is on the preacher's side now ; and there's John Stuart, Hal Skyes, and a whole crowd of girls. But my! they will be like lambs among wolves. I am sorry for them now."

"Would it not be a great fight for us to take a stand with them and show a solid front to Harry Keith and his crowd of scoffers?" This vision rushed into Ed Crockett's mind after the suggestion of Clarence Bush—that the young people would be like lambs among wolves. He continued : "It will be a mean thing if we do not try to keep them from the wolves."

"Hello, boys!" called out the voice of Mike Masters, who had just driven up in his old rickety wagon drawn by the same little old bony horses.

Mike was visiting the store for the first time since he was beaten up by the mob two weeks before. He was still weak, but had gained some strength in the last few days. He was recognized by the boys, but it was clear they regretted to see him. One remarked while Mike was climbing out of the wagon: "It is bad for Mike that he is able to come down to-day."

"That's so," said Clarence Bush.

"Can't we get him back home before five?" asked Ed Crockett.

"Another spree to-night would about finish him," suggested Bert Redecker.

By this time Mike had hitched his ponies and walked up to where the boys sat.

"Have a seat, Mike," said Clarence Bush, moving to give him room. "We're glad to see that you are better. You still look thin and weak. I guess you will go back home soon," continued the hay foreman.

"Yes," replied Mike. "As soon as I can get a little something to eat for my wife and children. I have struck it hard, boys—lots harder than ever before. I was hit hard the other night. It was much more than the pain from

the blow. It's no worse now than it has been lots of times before, but I just feel it more. The scales are falling from my eyes, boys. For sixteen long years I have been drinking, cussing, fighting, and my wife and children have been suffering and suffering. It's all off, boys. I may need more help, but Mr. Wilson is a power of strength to me. He's changed things some, boys, and Mike is going to be a better man."

"Mike," said Ed Crockett, "we are going to have an old time smoker to-night with plenty of free beer to drink, the best that's made in Kansas City. Would you like to join us?" This statement was made by Crockett to test Mike's power to resist temptation.

All eyes were on Mike. Many times those same boys had seen him fall under the pressure of much less temptation, and they had never known of his failing to fall. In an instant Mike was a changed man. The same old appetite which had long been a disease with him gripped him as firmly as if he were a piece of inanimate matter in the jaws of a vise. Had there been within his reach that moment whiskey, beer, or anything that would answer the craving of the appetite, he would at once have made a complete surrender to its power. The boys saw and understood all that Mike was suffering. He looked helplessly at them, and

then with an effort to get hold of himself again, he exclaimed, "My God! I thought that I was free, but I am not. Where has my strength gone?" and he looked about, a helpless victim. "How may I find it again?" he said, with an appealing look at the young men who sat by knowing not what to do.

"Mike," said young Bush, "let me get the groceries you need this evening. I want to go out to Mr. Holmes' place, and I will drive back with you."

This was done to save Mike from falling into other hands. If he had gotten into the store he would have been a drunken maniac even before five o'clock. The items were purchased by Clarence Bush, while the boys kept Mike in the shade of the tree. In a short time he and the hay boss were driving back over the road to his home. Mike was greatly depressed. More than once he exclaimed, "My God!" and then lapsed into silence.

The conversation in which the young men had engaged that afternoon, and the helpful interest they had shown to Mike Masters, was a revelation even to themselves. Two weeks before they could not have appreciated the spirit which moved them in the present conversation and prompted them to aid Mike in such a time of need. Many times before they had allowed

him to rush headlong into the merciless grasp of dissipation with no thought of the great truth that they were their brother's keeper. All this had been brought about by the untiring efforts of the young missionary, his associations, his songs, prayers and sermons. These young men did not know it, but it was a fulfilment of God's promise: "And, lo, I am with you."

That such a change had come to pass in a community of such little promise illustrates the great need of men with good common sense and tact to do the Lord's work in the rural districts. It has long been the custom of the churches to keep their strong men, men of resource and power, in the city churches and stations in the larger towns where they can be well supported; to send the weaker and less qualified men—allowing the term qualified to be given its fullest meaning—to the country places. It is a fact that at this time the people in the country cannot be won for Christ and the church by just any one that the church may send. If spiritual leadership is again to assume its rightful place with the people in the country, qualified men must be sent there. And let it be understood that qualification for such a field does not mean the ability to preach and that only, but much more. The times require men of good sense, judgment and energy; and all of these thor-

oughly dominated by a spirit of consecration. This means that men are needed who have a real love for the people in the neglected places. Men who can adapt themselves to the conditions that exist in the rural districts and who possess the rare qualifications to interest people and set them to work.

What has been set forth in this volume of the character of Haden Wilson is a fair illustration of the kind of men needed in the great neglected fields of our nation, and the wonderful work that may be wrought by those possessing these qualifications. The rewards are enough to challenge the strongest to enter the service.

The crowd of young men, after Mike and Clarence drove away, dispersed without reaching any understanding as to which side they would line up with that night. The words of Ed Crockett, "Be sure you are right, then go ahead," lingered with some, and the suggestion that the young people who had and would stand with the missionary would be as lambs among wolves, brought to the minds of some a picture that enlisted all their sympathy and appealed to their manhood. The wolf had already shown his teeth in the person of Harry Keith that morning. There were other wolves. They would grow bold. To stand off and see them enter the fold of the innocent lambs, intim-

idate them, stampede and destroy their faith, while these young men stood quietly by, appeared to some to be the consummation of cowardice. But, with all this, not one would decide fully to defend the lambs.

CHAPTER XIV

“THE GOOD SHEPHERD GIVETH HIS LIFE FOR HIS SHEEP”

THAT afternoon Haden Wilson left his room without explaining to any one where he was going or the purpose of his mission. He rode in a buggy that went out toward the tank. At the time nothing was thought about it by those who saw him drive away. He had been seen before to go in that direction, as well as in many others. The deeply set purpose which was indicated by his firmly set jaws, his statue-like posture of body, his hands with almost the grip of a vise clasping each other, and his gaze fixed steadily ahead, turning neither to the right nor to the left, was not observed by those who watched him as he drove away. The farmer with whom he rode lived in the Verdigris bottom, some miles beyond and east of the railroad. The missionary had met him before, once at a sick neighbor's where he had called, and the farmer had on one or two occasions attended a service at the schoolhouse. The brief acquaintance had served to develop a mutual

friendship between the two men. The farmer was very glad to have the missionary, who stated that he was going in the neighborhood of the tank, to ride with him. He, however, was surprised and disappointed that his companion was so little inclined to talk. Several times on the way he tried to interest him in a conversation, but each time his efforts ended with a blunt "yes" or "no."

This temper of young Wilson, so different to that which the farmer had seen on former occasions, was a puzzle to his companion and friend, and had the effect of checking his growing admiration for the young missionary.

The farmer did not and could not observe that his companion's mind, body and soul were absorbed in a great purpose. He could not see, neither could he understand how it was with the missionary that he was so absorbed in a contest which involved the highest destiny and happiness of a score or more of the community's best young men. He could not appreciate the fact that it was his or any one else's business to lift from the burdened backs and aching hearts the load which avarice, fettered with all manner of sin, sought to bind the unsuspecting, innocent and helpless. He could not understand how it was that on that afternoon this young man was risking his life that he might carry out his mis-

sion to save others. Neither could he comprehend how it was that he himself, though he might hear the groans and witness the desolation wrought by sin, should join in the battle against the enemy.

Such impulses had never called this friend of the missionary to a vision of service in which the cry of others was heard above that of his own selfishness.

When the tank was reached the missionary thanked the farmer friend, who drove away still more puzzled by his strange actions. There was no house within a half mile of the tank, neither was there a train due until nine o'clock that night, and why it was he would stop there at that time in the day and not explain his purpose, raised questions of suspicion in the farmer's mind. For he had learned to interpret the actions of all men whom he could not understand, or who would not explain away all doubts, as intending some wrong. So it was doing no violence to his conscience when he reached the conclusion that the missionary was bent on some dark deed.

Haden Wilson stood on the railroad track for some minutes. All was silent save the constant dropping of water which was forcing its way through a small hole in the bottom of the wooden tank. These little bits of water—drop,

drop, drop—into the tiny pool which they had created below attracted the attention of the silent visitor, and he stood contemplating it. As he watched the drops of water follow each other, as regular as the tick of his watch, and so readily lose themselves in the body of the whole, a meadow-lark hopped out from its hiding-place to the pool, dipped its little bill into the sparkling liquid, lifted its head and stretched its neck high above its graceful body, swallowing with great satisfaction the refreshing draught. The performance was repeated several times. The lark was joined by its mate, and soon other feathered friends came. A little wren flew down from its hiding-place beneath the eave of the tank, and a mocking-bird left its perch on top to join its neighbors. All stood around drinking from the sparkling little pool. There was no crowding, no protest, or objections among these little neighbors. All drank, and drank, and drank. And the shining particles continued to drop, drop, drop. Each had enough; and still drop, drop, drop came the water from above. The little pool seemed to smile as it added to the comfort and happiness of the feathered denizens of the prairie. The wren with a sweet note, as if to say, "Thank you," flew back to its place under the eave. The graceful larks in a louder tone of

thankfulness hopped away to their paradise, and the mocking-bird full of joy and thanks for blessings took its flight to the shady bough on an oak where it, too, poured forth its beautiful song of praise.

“It is,” young Wilson mused, “our Father who cares for the birds. How different to these little creatures is man. Out of the great abundance the birds only seek that which they can use to-day and leave the remainder free from the mark of preëmption or the slimy coils of greed. How unlike man, who is seeking to pervert all of God’s plans. He has taken his gold and silver and through the spirit of greed has used it to mortgage the happiness of mankind. Through his spirit of avarice man has thwarted God’s purpose in perverting the means of his creation for food, raiment, home and happiness, and brought forth from these, his own creations, wrecked manhood and womanhood, desolated homes, weeping and disconsolate wives, mothers and widows, hungry, helpless children, and young men and women sold into slavery.”

These were the thoughts of the missionary for the brief space of time as he stood under the shadow of the tank. As his reflections reached the vision of young men, he was no longer lost in reverie, but was alert. It was

his mission to save young men. That was why he was at the tank. He turned and looked up the railroad track, which stretched to the north, then south; but there was no one in sight.

It was now four o'clock. If the bootleggers, he reasoned to himself, are to be at the store at five o'clock it is time for them to be in sight. After a few moments' reflection he decided that he would go up the track, as he was sure they would come from the north, and he started out in a brisk walk over the ties. He had gone nearly half a mile when he saw some distance ahead two men coming up the right-of-way. He was sure they were the parties for whom he was looking. Each one carried packages sufficiently large to hold several dozen bottles of the stuff such as was generally handled by men of their character. Both parties continued toward each other; the bootleggers, closing up ranks, walked side by side on the track.

From their actions it was not difficult to judge that they were suspicious of the party in front. At this point it was necessary for them to get on the track, for the right-of-way crossed a deep ravine. A bridge had been built over it, so it was an easy matter to cross on the ties; whereas it would require considerable more time to follow a path which led some distance

away and then back to the railroad some three or four hundred yards to the south.

As the missionary and bootleggers walked forward they met on the bridge above this ravine. The two men recognized the missionary and their looks were not those of friendly greetings.

The missionary stopped when within a few feet of the men facing him. They also stopped short and set down their burdens.

"What do you want?" demanded the bully, with a brutal scowl on his face.

"I want to talk to you men," was the reply.

"All right, fire away," said one of the men.

"You're going to the store?"

"Yes, but what business is it of yours?"

"I think I know your business, and I wanted to ask you not to go."

"I am sorry, young man, but we can't oblige you."

"If you could understand things there as I do, I am sure you would not go. There are a number of young men, and a few of the older ones, too, who are trying to give up a dissipated life. The next twenty-four hours mean much to them. If you go there to-night and distribute the liquor you have, there could hardly any worse thing happen to the community. I want to save the boys. If you go, there is little hope for them.

So I thought if I could get you to understand it, you might listen to reason."

"Why, mister, if the young men want to drink, get drunk, and spoil your plans, that's none of our business."

"Surely you know that what you will do, if you go on, may result in serious injury and maybe the death of some of those parties. You know that such serious things have happened. And, don't you know that whatever does happen from their drinking the liquor you are largely responsible for, and that does make it your business?"

"See here, mister, that's all baby prattle. We've heard it before. You need not talk to us. It's our business to deliver the goods."

"To whom?"

"Harry Keith."

"Where are these goods from?"

"Kansas City."

"Are they to be distributed free?"

"Yes, half of them."

"Why not all of them?"

"See here, mister, there is nobody in business for their health. It's money at the bottom, and what is given away will soon come back when the boys are broke in."

"Do you get the proceeds from the sales?"

"Yes."

“Will you take the money from me for that half and deliver the whole to me and go back?”

“What will you do with it?”

“Destroy it.”

“No, sir. That is injuring our business.”

“Can you not wait then—not go to-day?” and the missionary gave the men an appealing and steady look which meant more than he said.

“No one has interfered with you before; can you not wait?”

“We don’t stand for that. You are playing with dynamite, my young friend. We will be late now. Get out of the way,” and the two men picked up their packages.

“I am pleading for the young men and children, and God being my helper I intend to defend them against your cursed business,” and Haden Wilson showed in every fibre of his being that he meant it.

The men could not go on without coming in close touch with the antagonist, and they saw to do that meant to fight. To turn back and take the path would cause at least twenty-five minutes’ delay. Soon, however, they determined on their course. Still holding their packages, each rushed forward at the same time, thinking to overpower their enemy and go on with no further resistance.

As young Wilson instantly saw and read in

their eyes what was intended, he braced himself, gave a lunge forward and received the impact of the rush without being borne down.

The bully was hurled back, almost losing his balance and falling to the ground twenty feet below. In an effort to save himself he let go his package, which crushed on the rocks under the bridge. The other man was slightly staggered, but still held to his goods. The leader was now in a great rage. He saw what a great calamity had happened, and turned to his enemy, cursing furiously. Both rushed at him again; this time the young man quickly moved to one side, thereby escaping the desperate fury of the bully, who, missing his mark, staggered some feet beyond before he could check himself. In moving, as the missionary had done, he not only escaped the mad rush of the one, but was able to throw his full weight with all the power he could command against the other. The shock was so great that he, too, staggered back, still holding on to his goods. The missionary instantly pulled himself together and rushed forward before he had time to regain his balance and bore him down. To protect himself against this assault the package was dropped, which, by a violent kick of the missionary, was hurled some distance below the bridge and the bottles crushed on the rocks.

This was all the work of a moment. While the missionary had succeeded in destroying the liquor he was face to face with an unequal contest. To continue longer with both men on the bridge he knew was dangerous, and there was little doubt what the result would be. All this flashed through young Wilson's mind in a moment, and to protect himself with every advantage, before his enemies had sufficiently recovered to rush to another attack, he retreated from the open bridge to where it joined the dump. This dump rose some eighteen or twenty feet from the level surface below and sloped gradually from the top to the base at an angle of nearly forty-five degrees. The position was not a safe one in such a contest, but was more desirable than to have remained on the bridge. Should he be overpowered and hurled from his footing, the fall would not be so dangerous.

A few rapid strides carried the missionary to the end of the bridge, and he only had time to turn and brace himself to receive his antagonists, who were rushing at him with increased rage. The men being relieved of their burdens, which they had endeavored to save, determined to make short work of the object of their wrath. Their assault was received with all the force that the missionary could command. The im-

pact was fierce. A blow that was directed at the bully fell on its victim with such force that he recoiled and staggered back on the bridge. But the united strength of the two was too great for the single contestant and he too was forced backward. Struggling to regain his balance and to receive another assault, he made the discovery that his right hand with which he had dealt the furious blow was helpless. The wrist had been dislocated ; the hand hung limp and refused to obey the uplifted arm in another desperate effort to resist the attack.

The punishment he received by this assault was horrible. Haden Wilson was borne down by terrific blows. All was dark. There was a sensation of falling down, down, he could not tell to what depths, and then all consciousness ceased. In great fury the missionary had been hurled over the embankment, which saved him from still greater punishment, and he lay limp and helpless at its base. The body was visible from above and the two men glared at it with all the fury of enraged beasts. Could they have descended with safety to themselves, the helpless man would have received still greater outrageous treatment.

Seeing that the body remained in the same position with no signs of life, the two outlaws abandoned any further attack. They, too, had

not emerged from the contest without bearing visible marks of the battle. The leader's face was bleeding freely and one eye was already closed from the effects of the blow which sent him staggering upon the bridge. His companion had fared little better. While they were not disabled to the extent of preventing them from continuing their journey, yet the marks of the contest were so great that it would be decidedly unpleasant to face the crowd at the store. An explanation would be necessary, and there was a profound aversion to telling how it happened. And, too, their antagonist was probably dead, and they did not care to answer the charge of murder. Also the purpose of their journey to the store lay before their eyes a stranded wreck. The cases which contained the liquors had fared badly in the fall. So with a scowl and a curse, after a brief consultation, the two men turned and retraced their steps, leaving the scene of their murderous action wrapped in silence. After going some distance up the railroad track they left it and disappeared in the wood, which fringed a small stream that finally lost itself in the waters of the Verdigris River.

CHAPTER XV

THE SHEPHERD SMITTEN

THERE was unusual activity at the store. A large number of farmers and those working in the hay camps came in during the afternoon ; some to get their mail, others to buy supplies, and still others to cash their checks, which they had received for their week's labor in the hay-fields. Harry Keith was never more obliging. He allowed a timid little woman a better price than usual for the dozen eggs she offered for sale and gave her an extra large amount of the goods she bought for the price.

The men continued to collect in groups and discuss matters apparently of a serious nature. Those who had frequently been witnesses to such gatherings knew very well what might be expected. It was a sure index to the fact that the bootlegger was abroad and liable to make his appearance in their midst at any time. As the hour of five approached there was an air of expectancy on more than one face. The young men who early in the afternoon had collected in the shade of the oak at the back of the store,

and who had dispersed when Mike climbed back into the rickety old wagon, were again engaged in earnest conversation.

Five o'clock passed. Harry Keith had already ceased to jolly his customers who entered the store. He was now irritable and manifestly cross toward some, especially a timid girl and bashful boy who called for mail. Every minute the prospects for carrying out his plans which were to be the death-blow to the missionary's efforts grew less. Some who had been induced to stay on account of prospects of free beer were becoming restless, and he knew would soon go away. At six o'clock he called Arch Crow, a well-known character who was ready to follow the bidding of the merchant. After a brief conference Crow mounted his horse and rode rapidly away toward the tank. By six-thirty the crowd of men who had been induced to stay began to disperse. Arch Crow returned after having been gone some forty minutes and reported to his chief. That it displeased him was clear by the oaths that he uttered.

By seven-thirty the meeting folks began to arrive at the store. Some stopped to spend a short time there, while others drove on to the schoolhouse. The keen eye of the merchant, however, had noted that the missionary had not

made his appearance, and in some way he associated this fact with the failure of his emissaries, through whom he would gladly turn the joy of the neighborhood into mourning. He was not entirely easy. The character of the two men was well known to him and in their hands he was sure little mercy would be shown the missionary.

By eight o'clock a good crowd had gathered at the schoolhouse, and those who took part in the song services were engaged in rendering some of their favorite selections. These songs had drawn into the building quite a number. There was a respectful silence, all seeming to enjoy the music.

It was noted by this time that the missionary was not present. The fact was particularly emphasized by Clarence Bush and some of his companions who had felt more than usual that afternoon the appeal to their best manhood on behalf of the "lambs," as they termed the children. They had watched with increased interest the failure of the bootleggers to arrive at the given time. They had also seen Haden Wilson drive away with the farmer whom they knew lived beyond the tank. All these incidents, together with his failure to be at his post, which had never occurred before, had raised in their minds grave suspicions.

Pretty soon the question, "Where is the preacher?" was being asked. No one seemed to know. The singing ceased and the crowd grew restless. One who knew related to his neighbor what had been planned for that afternoon and night. This information was soon passed around, and as it traveled it was enlarged. By nine o'clock the schoolhouse had been abandoned by the people who collected in groups outside, all discussing why the missionary was not present.

A number of reasons were advanced. Clarence Bush and his friends related all they knew of his going away, and in a few minutes after, it was told that the missionary had been seen at the tank that afternoon with his suit case waiting to catch a south-bound freight train. This interpretation of his absence was given prominence. It meant that he had left the country, given up the fight. Some went so far as to claim that he had been discovered and was fleeing from his pursuers. This conclusion was so in keeping with other characters who had imposed upon the people that it was accepted by some as true. But others would not believe it. Among those who defended the young man most vigorously against any wrong act was Ethel Holmes. She spurned the idea of his leaving the community in such a manner.

To those who knew what had been planned that day, and who understood that the young missionary had driven toward the railroad track there was a fear that some tragedy had been enacted. One was sure the people had been buncoed, and others were expressing themselves freely against all men who sought to preach and spread the knowledge of the Bible. They declared that Harry Keith was right. However, the contingent was small.

The contention of others was of a much more serious character. They were thoughtful men and women of the community; those who had seen much of the young man, and had placed entire confidence in him. They would not entertain the idea that he had left them without an explanation. While the cause was freely discussed by both contending parties Ethel's father, at her suggestion, proposed that they go to his room and see if his clothing and suit case were gone. This reasonable suggestion was at once adopted. A number of citizens left the schoolhouse grounds for that purpose. This was a signal for the crowd to disperse, some going to the private home where the missionary boarded and others to collect at the store.

The rumor was still on many tongues that the missionary had taken flight. The citizens

who collected at the home where he stayed were at once shown into his room. There was nothing missing. His Bible lay open on the table; an extra suit of clothes hung on the wall, and his suit case sat in one corner. A package of laundered clothes, which had been brought in that day, lay on the bed. The fact that the missionary's personal effects were still in the room was reported by those who had made the examination, and resulted in silencing the ones who were willing to spread abroad the slanders that he was a fraud and had been discovered.

That something was wrong grew on the crowd. The people became very anxious to know what had happened, and as the minutes lengthened into hours few were there who thought of returning to their homes.

Clarence Bush suggested that they organize a searching party to go to the tank, and make a search of the railroad for some distance on either side. Not all understood why he thought of such a plan. This suggestion was adopted at once, and in a short time a large party left the store for the tank. Of those who were in the front ranks of the searchers were Clarence Bush, Ed Crockett, and Mr. Holmes and his daughter, Ethel. As the night wore on Ethel's anxiety increased. Others among

the women became unnerved and wept bitterly, when it was freely talked that the missionary had likely been the victim of foul play. Ethel rode her faithful pony, which never lost his place in the front of the party. She was always alert, searching with a trained eye every object that was visible in the golden moonlight.

The first party was soon followed by others in buggies, on horseback, and still others on foot. Few men were left at the store. In a short time the prairie toward the tank was dotted with people, some moving slowly, calm and self-possessed ; others at a rapid gait, rushing in one direction and then in another, excited, but with no purpose.

It was only a few minutes' ride under the present pressure to reach the tank. By concerted effort the advanced party was looking in every direction for some sign that would furnish a clue. At the tank there was nothing to aid. In a short time the little group stood in its shadow where Haden Wilson had stood a few hours before and listened to the drops of water as they came down from above, and watched the little feathered denizens of the prairie as they drank from the sparkling fountain. All now was silence save the continued drop, drop, drop of the water as it still pressed its way

through the tiny worn hole and splashed into the pool below.

"The railroad and right-of-way to the north on either side should be searched first," said Clarence Bush. He suggested that at least half a dozen should go over the right-of-way inside the wire fence, and as others arrived that they join hands and go over the prairie as far as the point where the railroad crossed the bridge some half mile distant.

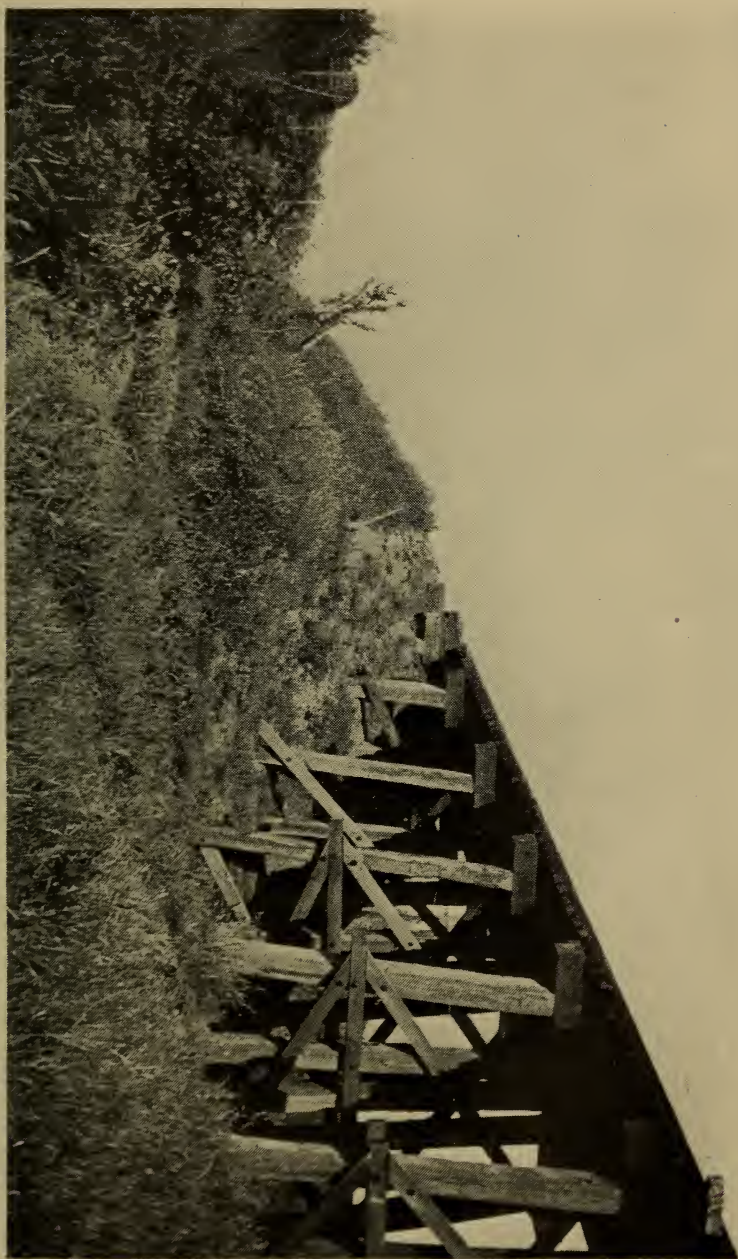
By the time these plans had been agreed upon a large crowd had reached the tank. All fell into line as much as is possible with an untrained body. Ethel, her father, and Clarence Bush, with Ed Crockett and two others set off at once on foot over the railroad track and right-of-way, searching eagerly every object. In a short while the prairie for some distance on either side of the track was lined with men and boys, all bent on finding the lost missionary. The advance was almost in a solid and uniform line. The short march under the hasty suggestion of system had served to bring the more excitable characters, to a degree, under the sway of determined numbers. The movements were slow, but no ground was covered without being carefully inspected. Every section of the railroad for some distance north and south was familiar to Ethel as it was also to

most of those who were with her and her father. When the long dump, which joined the bridge and upon which the tragedy was enacted that afternoon, was reached it was suggested that the party separate, two going on the east side, a like number to the west of the track and the others following the road-bed. Ethel, followed by her father, turned to the right into the path that wound its narrow way along the base of the dump. The path seemed to descend lower and lower and the track of the railroad to ascend in a like proportion.

The moon had passed its zenith. The shadows cast by its silvery rays were growing in length. The last hundred yards of the path, which led beneath the bridge and in which Ethel and her father were traveling, was filled with a frowning shadow of the railroad dump which towered above. The silence and gloom sent a chill to Ethel's heart as she pressed forward.

Clarence Bush and his companion, Ed Crockett, who followed the base of the dump on the west side, rushed ahead with greater speed than Ethel and her father, reaching the opening under the bridge and paused in the deep shadows of the trees. The rays of the moon which fell through the cross timbers that supported the ties and steel rails fell on an object lying prone at the base of the dump on the

RAILROAD BRIDGE WHERE THE MISSIONARY AND BOOTLEGGERS MET



opposite side of the ravine. At once both men recognized it as the form of the missionary, and almost at a single bound both were kneeling beside it.

The body still lay as it landed in its plunge from the railroad above, the head resting on the left arm, and the right arm thrown up lay against the dump as if to grasp and cling to some object. The lower limbs were half drawn as if in a last struggle of resistance. The whole body showed signs of terrible punishment. The face was swollen and disfigured and gave the impression that it was lifeless.

The first impulse of the two men was to place their friend in a more comfortable position, and raising the head and shoulders slightly, an audible groan passed his lips. The body was still warm. There was life! In a moment the minds of the two men were teeming with plans to save the missionary. The discovery of the body and the fact that there was still life in it were the work of only a few seconds.

In the midst of the excitement following the discovery, Ethel and her father rushed out of the deep shadows. Ethel dropped by the side of the disfigured man, clasping the still uplifted hand in both her own. The touch was only for one moment, when she exclaimed, "He is not dead! Go for the doctor! Go quick!" This

imperative command brought the bewildered men to understand what should be done.

Those who followed on the railroad track had arrived by this time and stood on the bridge above looking down on the unusual scene. The news of the discovery was shouted from the bridge and the narrow valley was soon crowded with the eager questioning and helpless people. Swift runners were dispatched for the doctor, who was to meet them at the tank. An improvised litter was soon constructed on which the helpless form of the missionary was placed, and the crowd took up a silent march over the right-of-way back to the tank.

Those who bore it through the deep shadows and out through the moonlight were four of the young men who had that afternoon discussed the devotion of the missionary to his cause. They were not willing a few hours before to follow him, but now they would give up all to have him restored and again push his work as he had during the past weeks.

Had they and all those who followed in the slow and silent march known with what willingness this young man had followed his Master, even to the point of giving his life for the sake of those who now followed and mourned him as dead, they could have more fully understood the meaning of Jesus when he said:

“The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep.”

The doctor arrived soon after the party reached the tank and the hasty examination revealed the fact that while there was still life in the body, the heart was sluggish and responded slowly to stimulants. Within a few minutes directions were given by Dr. Skyes to remove the patient as speedily as possible to his room.

Again the silent crowd took up its march over the prairie. There was no sound save tramp, tramp, tramp of the sad-faced people. The soft rays of the moon as they fell across the upturned face of the patient seemed to unite in sympathy with the stricken throng.

In the march to the store the doctor took his place on one side of the patient; Ethel did not for one moment give up her place on the other.

The crowd at the store anxiously pressed upon those returning from the search to know if there was any hope. No one knew. All that could be stated was that the missionary was still alive. That he had been unmercifully beaten and left by his murderers as dead. The doctor would not, and in fact could not, give out any statement that was encouraging. To all that sought to know the truth he would only say, “As long as there is life there is hope.”

As soon as the patient was in his room Dr. Skyes set to work with a grim determination to win back from death its victim. The heart's action showed marked improvement. The delicate and painful work of setting the broken limbs and the dislocated joints in the right hand and dressing the ghastly wounds on his face and head was heroically begun. This was the work of hours ; but not for one moment was the task relinquished until the bruised and mutilated body had received the most careful attention. During the long ordeal, while yet unconscious, the patient gave evidence of great pain.

At the conclusion there still remained on the physician's face the signs of the greatest apprehension. His fears were of internal injuries. The fact that the patient had not rallied was taken as the gravest sign, since unconsciousness of many hours' duration had followed the shock resulting from the terrible blows which he had received. When the work of dressing the wounds had been completed, then followed the anxious watching for returning signs of consciousness.

After waiting long beyond midnight for some word of hope many of the people sad and down-cast drove away to their homes ; yet there still remained numbers of anxious watchers.

During the process of dressing the patient's

wounds Dr. Skyes made a surprising discovery. Ethel Holmes, who remained at the missionary's side during the walk from the tank, took up the work of aiding the doctor with such aptness as to surprise him greatly. At one or two points in the operation, which was enough to try the nerve of the stoutest-hearted man, she showed courage and even understanding that would have been a credit to a nurse of years' experience. Others were ready and anxious to aid, but as the work advanced less skilful hands gave way, leaving the whole process to the doctor and to Ethel, whose minds appeared to act in perfect harmony as to the necessity of every movement. Wherever assistance was needed her alertness never failed to respond with an accuracy and delicateness of touch that greatly astonished the doctor.

He had known Ethel since she was ten years of age, and to his certain knowledge she had never had an opportunity to acquire the skill she commanded. It was an endowment, a gift of the Creator, which could not be acquired even in the greatest schools. She and her father joined the doctor in the silent and anxious watch for signs of returning life, and the physician rejoiced that he had found in Ethel an assistant whom he could trust should they have

the privilege of nursing their young friend back to health.

At Modoc that night another unusual thing happened. It was not the first time, nay there been many such times in the past twenty-five years, when the crowds had witnessed tragedies, or waited upon death. But such occasions had been the outgrowth and results of the drunken debauches which the bootleggers industriously encouraged. Less than two years before the present time James Fielder, a substantial farmer and cow-man, had fallen a victim to Bushnell Stagg's rage generated by bad liquor. The crowd watched and waited as the life of the victim ebbed away. On that occasion there was cursing and raging. The cry of the fatherless children and the wail of the disconsolate widow mingled with the curses of the drunken mob—amid the blending of such awful discord James Fielder passed into the other world.

Some of the same crowd watched again on this occasion for the grim messenger to do his worst; but how changed was its temper! Instead of the ravings, curses, piteous cries and wails, there was silence, and sorrow, and prayer. The face of every one who moved about in the light of the moon bore marks of pity. Some waited, seated in the shadows of the oaks back of the store, where hours before the young men

debated what course they should adopt—whether to follow the plans of Harry Keith, or to stand with the missionary in his fight to save the children. Several of the same young men were there.

“Boys,” said Clarence Bush, “I am sure I know how it all happened,” and then he interpreted or explained the purpose in the missionary’s heart when he drove across the prairie, and what transpired when he met the bootleggers.

“It is the greatest outrage of all,” broke in Ed Crockett, as Clarence continued his description of the scene at the bridge.

“The villains had better never show themselves in this section of the country again!” stated another of the boys in a determined and ringing voice.

“Have you thought, boys, what Mr. Wilson would have us do at this time if he were able to suggest anything?” It was Clarence again speaking.

“We now believe he has been right all the time, and this afternoon it is more than likely that he gave his life to save us from the temptations of those devils. While we were not brave enough to decide to go with him, he was fighting like a brave warrior to make it easier for us.”

This speech went like an arrow deep into the heart of the crowd that listened to the hay boss.

"Could he call us," continued Clarence, "and demand whether we would follow him against any odds in a fight against those outlaws, all of us would be glad to go anywhere and even die in defending him against their murderous attacks."

To this last statement a chorus of voices responded in a tone that left no doubt of their loyalty.

"It has been coming up to me time and time again, since he has been here," continued young Bush, "why is it that a young fellow like he is, educated, handsome, intelligent, and with a tact to make people his friends, would be engaged in a work like he is doing. I am sure he could fill good places in towns where the conditions are far more agreeable—nice churches and a membership that is ready to aid him in his work. Instead of that he goes into the roughest places as he has here, and as he did over in the Spavinaw hills, visits the poorest and filthiest homes, and helps to nurse the sick and the dying. What he has done to-day makes it clear to me that there is but one answer. He is following that Good Shepherd, boys, he told us about, willing to give his life for his sheep.

"And now what do you think he would have us do to-night if he could stand here before us after all that has happened? It would not be to tell us to go out and hunt and kill his murderers. No, I don't think it would be that. But I'll tell you what I think he would say," continued the young man, after a short pause. "It would be that we give up our wicked ways and follow Christ as he is following him."

Deep silence succeeded this short but telling speech. Some of the boys shifted uneasily, others stood up and moved about as if to run away from what they had heard.

"If one of us were where he is now, I think I know what he would do," said Ed Crockett.

"What's that?" broke in several voices.

"He would pray for our recovery. I am sure he would."

"I think so, too," said Jesse Cole and Bert Redecker.

"It looks hard, after all that he has done and tried to do for us, that none of us can or will pray for him." This remark was made by Ed Crockett.

"Yes, it does. But you know he has told us that before we can be heard for others, our own lives must be right with God. We must be willing to say: 'Thy will be done in us.' Each one of us knows what we should do—fully

accept Christ as he has pleaded for us to do. We know we could do that. As long as we reject him our prayers for our friends cannot be heard."

This speech by Clarence Bush sent another dart into the hearts of the waiting crowd. It was the result of the missionary's faithful teaching. Prayer had not been left out of his plans. He believed in prayer. In the past five years he had not gone to a single duty that he did not first ask to be guided by the Divine power in its performance. The subject was on his heart and in his mind, and very few of his services were concluded that he did not emphasize prayer. To all outward appearances in Modoc his words had been sown in barren soil. But the deep impressions that had been made, and the fruit they were struggling to bring forth, was a fulfilment of what all faithful servants of Christ should learn that "My word shall not return to me void."

The silence that brooded over the crowd became a burden. The deep sense of conscious guilt, and the depressed feeling of helplessness, both as to themselves and their afflicted friend, had now taken hold of the young men.

A sudden movement of those who were watching at the house, which was only a short distance away in full view of the watchers, at-

tracted attention, and there was a quick movement of the crowd in that direction.

The patient had shown slight signs of returning consciousness. The news had sent a thrill of joy to each heart, and when the young men learned that fact it brought to some of them the feeling that does not give expression of delight in demonstration, but that which craves solitude. With this slight encouragement, after a brief consultation they left the scene of their anxiety and rode silently away.

It was four o'clock before there were any indications to encourage those watching at the bed of the missionary that the battle for life might win. By that time Dr. Sykes had matured his plans for nursing his patient. The strictest regulations were to be observed. No one was to be admitted to the sick room, except the attendant, without permission from the doctor. To aid in carrying out these regulations Dr. Sykes was greatly encouraged, for he had found out in a few brief hours that Ethel Holmes was a faithful and efficient nurse and one he could fully trust. As the hours wore away the heart's action improved, and by seven o'clock the patient had fallen into a peaceful slumber, which was to the waiting physician a most encouraging sign.

CHAPTER XVI

“MY WORD SHALL NOT RETURN UNTO ME
VOID”

THE rumor that the Sunday-school missionary had been murdered spread over the country with surprising rapidity. The people of the entire section were stirred to an unusual degree. By nine o'clock on Sunday morning a crowd such as had never been seen before at Modoc was gathering that they might learn the facts. The first news that had gone abroad was that the missionary was dead, and many who came were greatly surprised to learn that he was still alive with prospects of recovery.

Many of those who came visited the scene of the tragedy and made a careful examination of the signs of the conflict. It was easy for those with long years of experience in Western life to put together the movements of all the parties and the mute signs, the known tracks of the bootleggers, and also those of the missionary coinciding exactly with those found on the road-bed and in the path below which led under the bridge, where they had gone to secure the

wrecked packages of liquor; it was easy to reach almost a perfect detail of all that had happened. There was no doubt but that the deed had been committed by the two men who had for many months plied their trade in and about Modoc, showing a gross disregard of the laws of both God and man. As the awful magnitude of the results of that business, which the people then discussing it had sanctioned, came up before them, their indignation arose to a degree that was dangerous to tamper with.

The well-known interest that Harry Keith had taken in the lawless acts of these men, and his open encouragement of them, together with his avowed purpose of driving the missionary out of the country, made it very unpleasant for that gentleman to face the enraged, and thoroughly outraged community. He was not long in detecting this gathering storm of indignation, and in a short time he was seen driving away from his home.

One of the pathetic scenes of the morning was the gathering of the children who came from many of the homes in the community. The sad little faces, some with eyes brimming with tears as they looked toward the place where their good friend lay speechless, was a mute and eloquent appeal that touched the hearts of the roughest and strongest men.

The service on that day was to have been largely in the interest of the children, an interest hitherto unknown to them and the community before the missionary came. The two weeks' visiting from home to home and his oft-repeated plea for the children, and his appeals to the parents to lead a better life, had served to give the children themselves, and also many of the adults, a new vision of child-life. The children knew that they had found in him a new friend, through whose message they had learned for the first time of the great love of Christ for the children. That wicked men could horribly beat and murder such a friend filled their little hearts with pity and anguish. They felt that with his going, should he die, somehow there would also disappear the new-found joy that had been kindled in their childish lives.

By ten o'clock the positive assurance was given out by the doctor that there was much to encourage them to hope for the patient's recovery. His vitality was returning in a marked degree and with it a rational understanding that removed the first grave apprehensions of a fracture of the skull and a permanent injury to the brain. At this hour many had gathered at the little schoolhouse, but no service was begun. When the good news was learned by the superintendent, Mrs.

Holmes, it was publicly stated that Mr. Wilson might recover. This report brought a marked change. The high tension was relieved and many thought that the services of the Sunday-school might proceed. The Scripture lesson followed the favorite song, and then a short prayer. In the prayer a pathetic appeal was made for what every heart present desired—that the life of the missionary might be spared. There was a feeling that they were as a flock without a shepherd.

During the progress of the service Clarence Bush entered the school building and took a seat far up to the front. At the conclusion of the statement of Mrs. Holmes that they would have the Sunday-school next Sunday, Clarence arose to his feet, saying that he wished to make a statement, and began by asserting that he had been one of the biggest cowards in the state.

“I want now,” he said, “to set everything right so far as I am able. Ever since Mr. Wilson came I have known—yes, long before he came—that my life was wrong. To drown this very feeling I joined the other boys who were led by Harry Keith in plans to get rid of him. For two weeks I have stood by and watched him wage the battle, single and alone, for my soul and the souls of others that should have long before this time put me to utter

shame. Yesterday afternoon he reached the climax of the contest. He did all that he has preached to us about Christ. He offered his life to save me from eternal death! When what he did came to me last night I felt that I was the poorest and meanest wretch that ever lived. I rode out on the prairies to find rest, but the very stars, the wind and the silence of the night, condemned me. In my distress I cried out for relief. I remembered the message of the lost sheep. I was one of them! lost, lost! I was helpless, friendless, but I remembered that he said Christ could save me from my guilt. Out there on the prairie I forgot myself in my despair and looked beyond, and surrendered my all to Christ. Now I want to say publicly, here where I have acted a coward so many times, that I accept Christ and expect to follow him as he would have me help to save others."

This brave speech was received by some with open-mouthed astonishment. Others, with tears streaming from their eyes, showed their joy by rushing to the young man with outstretched hands. While some wept quietly for joy, others gave way under the piercing words. They, too, had been cowards, and like Clarence Bush had been guilty of most disgraceful conduct toward the missionary. At that moment their guilt

was pressing hard on them. More than one had given themselves up to tears. At a glance the young hay boss saw that it was time for him to show his loyalty to Christ. Another voice whispered: “You are too fresh; what do you know of Christ?”

“God! forgive me for my cowardice,” came from Ed Crockett in a most pathetic appeal.

That appeal settled Clarence as to his duty. He had just said that he would follow him in helping to save others. What he should do was clear, and he threw aside the suggestion of Satan and like a brave young warrior faced his duty.

“We are all like the prodigal son. We have gone a long way off. But where we have gone the Good Shepherd has followed us. Lots of times we have slighted him, turned away and gone further out on the dark mountain. I have done it many times. But he would not give me up. He wanted to save us all last night, but some of you would not surrender. I did, and I have joy and a sweet peace! Boys, it all has come through him. You can’t save yourselves. You have been great cowards, but to see and to know that will not save you. I tried that. But we are saved by losing self in completely trusting Christ. Now while we sing ‘Just As I Am Without One Plea,’ as

many as are willing to trust him as I did, come up here and stand on this stage with me."

While young Bush was talking Ethel came in and took her seat near the organ and when the song was called for she turned to it, and with the low, sweet tones of the instrument, began to sing as if it were a plea from her own heart. All in the room were moved. Mike Masters had entered in time to hear what Clarence said, and before the first stanza was sung he rushed forward, declaring that for days he had been trying to reach that point.

"I give it all up," and Mike waved his long, bony hand backward as if he had left a great load. "It's all settled!" And he walked the stage greeting others as they came, all the while exclaiming, "Peace! peace! peace!"

Mike's Irish temperament, which always served to bring him into the lime-light in any crowd, was not subdued in his new experience which had come to him in surrendering all to Jesus.

"I have been the biggest coward and sinner of the whole bunch. All it has brought to me has been suffering. What that has been, no man can know—but he does," and a joyful expression broke over his face. "He tried many times to save me, but I could not understand it. But I do now," and Mike laughed.

While Mike talked, others came. Ed Crockett struggled with great doubt, but as he moved forward he threw up his hands, exclaiming: "It's all gone!" and rushed to Clarence Bush with an ecstasy of joy. The battle was on. More than a score were decided. From the little schoolhouse that day many, who had given years of their life to sin, walked out with a conscious knowledge of being free from its dominion. A new life, new aspirations, and a peace that satisfies were fruits of victory.

Clarence Bush was strengthened. It was his first opportunity to prove his loyalty. That he was now brave, where he had many times before proved a coward, brought to him an appreciation of himself that he had never experienced before. He was beginning to realize what was meant by "A conscience void of offense toward God and man." As he walked from the schoolhouse back toward the store, there was in him, stronger than ever before, a determination to surrender his life to the will of Christ.

It was generally understood that there would be no plans formulated by way of closing out the meeting until the missionary was able to dictate them, should he recover. All now felt that the services should be closed in some formal way since it had been stated by the

missionary that an organization of Christians should be perfected at the conclusion. Organized effort had often been emphasized, and now with the proper leadership many felt that they were willing to enlist to that end. But for such a leader all turned to the faithful missionary.

CHAPTER XVII

SOME REAL CONDITIONS WHICH DEMAND ATTENTION

FOUR days after the tragedy at the bridge Dr. Skyes reported that his patient would recover unless some unforeseen complication set in. This news brought great relief to his friends, and matters again settled down to something like their normal state. A great change, however, had come to the people of the community.

Early in the week a public meeting was held at the schoolhouse, at which a number of the citizens were present. The purpose of the meeting was to put the citizenship on record against the lawless conduct of some of its members, and against the whiskey vendors outside who had plied their trade with such horrible results. It was decided at this meeting that such violations of the law should cease, and a committee was appointed to notify Harry Keith that his connection with this nefarious business must be discontinued. If not, the extreme penalty of the law would be enforced.

This step was taken that he might have ample warning. Of course Harry blustered some, but he knew that back of this movement were men whom he had seen in action in other days, and that it was time for him to change some of his practices.

It is not our purpose to detail all the changes that partly or wholly took place in the few weeks that followed. Suffice it to say that many families became better neighbors. Their young men were no longer exposed to the evil that had thrived so long. There was a marked change in the observance of the Sabbath day, and the attendance at the Sunday-school each Sunday morning had steadily grown in numbers and increased in interest.

The ample supply of Bibles and periodicals furnished had been the means of encouraging many to read the Scriptures and wholesome literature who had never before given such matters the least consideration. In fact, the whole neighborhood was in a changing state, attempting to throw off some of its old habits that had bound it like a slave to the lowest level of civilized society. It had caught a glimpse of better things, and with little or no training to that end many of the people had set out to reach the higher goal. There were breakers—many of them ahead—but fortunately for these people,

as it is with each of us as individuals, they did not know what the future would bring forth.

Such periods come in the life of every community, where progress and the Protestant religion shed a dim light. Then it is that leaders are needed. At this point many a community has been led far out to sea and then set adrift without chart or compass. The greatest need of the rural districts to-day, as it was with Modoc, is capable and well-trained spiritual leaders. Throughout the entire country there are hundreds of communities without such leaders. In many instances where they have leaders, they are so narrow, their knowledge of men, conditions, and what is required of them, is so limited that their leadership is often a failure.

Here is a problem that claims the immediate attention of all patriotic citizens, and more particularly the Protestant churches. The reason is not far to seek. To-day we have proportionately fewer ministers and churches in the rural sections than existed twenty-five and fifty years ago. While this is true, our rural population continues to increase. Therefore there is a large per cent. of the people in the country without the uplifting force that has in the past proved an inspiration to a multitude of our people. The present generation needs this power ; if it

is denied it, society, the church, the state, and the nation will suffer irreparable loss.

Another reason why reaching the rural districts in an organized effort, by which medium only can spiritual leaders be supplied, claims more careful attention, is the lack of comity prevailing in the different denominations toward the efforts of each other in seeking to occupy these fields. It is a well-known fact that in many communities, where two or more denominations are seeking to form organizations, it almost invariably results in a very meagre support for the ministers, and consequently both churches are forced into a struggle for existence.

Such practices are a reflection on our boasted liberality. There is no other movement in the country which pursues the policy that has been, and is pursued by our Protestant churches in this matter.

It is high time for Christian organizations to be more careful in the expenditure of their Lord's money. The money, energy, and brain power that are wasted, but assumed to be expended in his name to promote denominational rivalry is one of the greatest perversions of the age. It defeats largely the real purpose of Christ's mission to men.

Haden Wilson, during the past five years, was often a helpless witness to such misguided

zeal. Many times its fruit was effectually to destroy his own work. What followed at Modoc is an echo of the experience of many a faithful missionary, as well as many other ministers of Christ, who have gone out into the great harvest field of our nation to seek and to save the lost and to establish Christianity in the destitute places.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE MISSIONARY GOES TO THE OZARKS

DURING the five years since Haden Wilson received his commission from the American Sunday-School Union he had given himself to incessant labor. His record at the home office showed that his rank was with the leading workers of the society. In the new and needy country, eastern Oklahoma, there was such great need for his services that he labored without much thought for his own health. These five years of unselfish labor had made inroads on his vitality that he had not himself detected. But it was fully realized in the struggle to recover from the experience, which came so near ending his missionary career. His recovery was slow. His anxiety again to resume the work at Modoc and carry to completion his plans also worked to retard his recovery.

After some weeks Dr. Skyes was convinced that complete rest and freedom from the scenes of his activities was necessary for the recovery of the missionary. This fact was communicated to the society and it was arranged that he should

spend at least one month in the Ozark Mountains at Eureka Springs, Arkansas. It was understood, however, that as soon as his health would permit he was to return to Modoc and continue his work, which had been so abruptly terminated.

On his departure for the mountains he was given a hearty Godspeed by a multitude of friends who gathered at the tank. Clarence Bush, who had in a few short weeks come to be recognized as the leader of the community to carry forward the work in the absence of the missionary, was ready to give himself to service to aid the cause he knew the brave and loyal missionary had labored to advance. One of the tokens of his devotion was evidenced to those present at the tank when, at the close of a modest little speech, the hay boss placed in the hands of the missionary a check for the sum of one hundred dollars. As the time for the departure drew nigh the crowd fell into line and slowly—some with sad faces, but others more cheerful and hopeful—bade the young man good-bye and gave him a hearty hand-shake.

Ethel was among the last of the throng. Her face had lost some of its ruddy glow. The month that had just passed had brought into her life new experience and also new

visions. In some way she had been transformed. She now appeared in her whole demeanor a brave, self-possessed and determined woman. During her service as a nurse many new aspirations were awakened in her life. Haden Wilson had even before that eventful period discovered that she was an exceptionally bright girl, and he often reflected in his own mind that with proper training and care she would develop into a most beautiful and useful woman. In her long hours of waiting for his returning health he had sought to encourage her to that end. In this he had a great opportunity, for after the crisis was passed, Mr. and Mrs. Holmes insisted that the patient should be moved to their home. This was done a few days after the tragedy, so they were thrown much together, and out of years of experience he selected from choice books at hand such as would tend to develop the noblest traits of her character and encouraged her to read them. With this new ambition budding in her life there had also come to her a fuller realization that she loved the missionary. But to Ethel they were the unfolding of her life, and she sought bravely to meet the issue which these new experiences might bring to her. While her love for the missionary was a strong uplifting force, she did not allow it so to possess

her life as to obscure the other visions which had been unfolded along with this new happiness. She would not allow it to be the one ruling passion of her life. She was conscious, even without being told in so many words, that could the object of her affections dictate the development of her life, it would be that she should grow into a sensible woman, with her mind, heart and body in one harmonious whole responding to God's will in consecrating all to some noble purpose. Just how this was to be done she did not know. But she believed that it would be revealed to her. With this sublime purpose and faith, free from foibles that have imprisoned so many noble young girls, blessed with graceful form and perfect health, Ethel appeared more beautiful than ever on that day when she gave her hand to Haden Wilson and said good-bye. His eyes again searched the recesses of her soul, and in that moment the two souls were in harmony. It thrilled her, and she bade the missionary farewell with a joy unspeakable.

CHAPTER XIX

DR. CYPERT SEEKS TO DISCREDIT THE MISSIONARY

THE story of the attempted murder of the Sunday-school missionary was given wide publicity. One of the daily papers of Kansas City sent a reporter to Modoc who secured the facts and wrote a long article which was published in the Sunday edition. A daily in Oklahoma did the same. The whole affair, including a description of the country and people about Modoc, also some of the tragedies of former years, were given conspicuous write-ups. The work of Haden Wilson and the opposition that sought to drive him out, and the final triumph of his cause while he lay struggling between life and death, made a story that thrilled thousands of people.

Modoc was at once a widely known place ; it was prominent, yet it was only a small community with a post-office and without a church and pastor. That this was so, moved ministers of two denominations to visit the community

with the view of organizing a church. The Saturday following the departure of the missionary, Rev. J. H. Cypert drove into the neighborhood of Modoc and announced that he would spend a few days, preaching each night. The people gave him a cordial welcome. They expected that he would continue the work of the missionary. The first Saturday night's service was well attended. Two services were held on Sunday. The Sunday-school met and did its work as faithfully as it could.

But Dr. Cypert did not enter into that part of the day's service as heartily as those present had expected. A glance at the literature that was being used seemed to satisfy him that it was an unclean thing. There was a good crowd present at the eleven o'clock service. But many people were disappointed. They came expecting to find a man, a duplicate of the one they had learned to love. But there were many things lacking. The doctor was much larger and far more imposing in his personal appearance. His voice was much stronger, and the congregation were made to understand that he was a minister possessing a large fund of knowledge and experience. This, however, instead of having the effect of drawing the people to him, drove them farther away.

In his eleven o'clock sermon Dr. Cypert out-

lined the purpose of his visit and stated that he would each night of the week preach a doctrinal sermon. He told of the need of an organized church. This same thought had been emphasized by the missionary, but he had refrained from naming any particular organization. Dr. Cypert was there to tell them of the creed of his church and to aid in organizing one of his kind.

To illustrate why they should have his kind : "I see," he exclaimed, with a manifestation of contempt, "that you have here a union Sunday-school, and you are using union literature. This should not be. This school should belong to some denomination. As it is, it belongs to nothing. The day for union work is past."

Much more the doctor said relative to the Sunday-school and its glorious history. Some were indignant at what he said ; others were hurt, wondering if their friend was wrong in promoting a work that should not be endorsed. Others knew not what to think. The whole procedure, as a way of promoting Christianity, was new to them and they did not understand how it was that all who claimed to represent the same cause could not work together along the same line harmoniously. There was much confusion, and the work started by the Sunday-

school missionary was in a fair way to be destroyed.

The doctor at the close of the service was subjected to some searching questions. Mrs. Holmes was indignant, and she did not hesitate to make her views known relative to the Sunday-school. "You object," she exclaimed, "to our literature. It is my understanding that the Scripture that we study is the same used in all other schools. Is it because it has not the name of some church printed on it instead of the American Sunday-School Union that you object to it? If that is true the same motive that prompts you to urge that reason would lead you to object to all church literature except your own, if by doing so you saw an opportunity to advance the interest of your own church.

"Again," Mrs. Holmes urged, "you contend that this Sunday-school belongs to nobody. I want to know," the superintendent said, with emphasis, "what the difference would be if it were named a Baptist school? Would we not have to use the same teachers? In fact would it not be made up of the same people of this community, and would not its success or failure depend on us regardless of what we name it? It is my understanding that the Society that publishes our literature is an old and very highly esteemed organization. Its board of di-

rectors is composed of Christian laymen of high standing and reputation, and the men the Society sends out are regarded as intelligent, consecrated characters by their respective denominations. If you or your church can justly claim more, pray tell us what it is."

Mrs. Holmes paused to give the doctor a chance to reply. But it was clear that he had met with a rebuke and had heard arguments that he did not expect and was not therefore prepared to answer.

After a brief pause, and noting that Dr. Cypert manifested no disposition to reply, Mrs. Holmes closed her heated remarks by adding, "I do not understand, since it is true that this society is an old and successful organization, with good men to manage its affairs and with a careful oversight of the Sunday-schools which its missionaries organize, how you can claim that this school belongs to nobody."

With this closing statement Mrs. Holmes, accompanied by a number of others who were friends of the little Sunday-school, left the building.

For several nights, even until the following Sunday, Dr. Cypert thundered away on the special doctrines of his denomination, its mode of baptism, and other great essentials, which, in his estimation, God required of the militant

church. A few were pleased with his version of salvation and expressed a willingness to accept his views. Others were in open rebellion. They had found nothing in what he said to agree with their first real impression of Christianity as they had received it from the missionary. They had noticed, too, that the doctor had not sought out the destitute and most lowly places as the missionary had done. Their sick were not visited and nursed by the doctor as they were by the missionary. All this resulted in giving the impression that the church he talked so much about would not be very helpful to the neglected and destitute.

Neither could many understand why it was that he could not speak commendingly of Haden Wilson. His work was never approved by this preacher. The people there knew what he had done. They knew his life—or they thought they did—that it was humble, trusting, helpful. That life had won its way into their hearts, and it was the doctor's greatest mistake not to endorse it. Notwithstanding all this, the new minister left his imprint on some of the people. The meeting was closed with the announcement that he would return at a certain date in the next month.

During the week following the close of Dr. Cypert's meeting, Rev. John Camp drove into

the neighborhood. He was there for the same purpose for which Dr. Cypert had labored. Rev. Mr. Camp was a jolly character, obliging and polite to a marked degree, and he sought to make himself agreeable by entertaining those about him with yarns, which were sometimes not very chaste. He also smoked and was as liberal as a "candidate, in setting up the cigars to the boys." In this way he sought to win the people. Some were disappointed when they failed to find that deep spiritual life which they felt should be one of the chief elements possessed by those who sought to work for Christ. Mr. Camp was always busy. He went into many homes, found those who were sick, but in some way he could not sink self and his denomination out of sight. He entered vigorously upon a course of sermons in which he set forth his creed, as the only way of salvation. The Sunday-school and children received some attention, but he failed to win the hearts of the children, although he knew and called many of them by name. To some his whole conduct appeared as "acted" that he might win a victory for self instead of losing self in One greater. His sermons contradicted in many essentials those of Dr. Cypert. All this was staggering to the people and had the effect of paralyzing the zeal of some of the new converts and prac-

tically stampeding the whole community. There were some, however, who approved of Mr. Camp. This brought on arguments between those who could not agree with them, and at times such arguments grew into heated disputes.

All this happened within thirty days after the missionary left the community with the hope of regaining his health. The picture, or such an attitude of Christians toward each other, is appalling, and yet it is true. Many other communities have and are now suffering in the same way. Does not such a condition call loudly for a better understanding between our denominations? Is it not a flagrant waste of our Lord's money and in direct opposition to his prayer that we might be "one," meaning without doubt "one" in the great work of promoting his kingdom?

The result of the visit of these two denominational workers brings out another fact that cannot be ignored. The church cannot hope to build up the cause it represents in the country by sending out poorly equipped men—narrow, selfish, or merely "smart" men. Those who are to do the Lord's work must be men who love the people and are willing to make sacrifices for them. They must feel and be in their lives what Christ was in his relation to the people,

willing and anxious to seek and to save the lost regardless of creeds.

It is but just to say, on this point, that denominational boards often find it very difficult to secure fit men to occupy mission territory. While the discord at Modoc was the result of the overzealous efforts of two narrow, overzealous preachers, it does not mean that such actions were authorized or endorsed by their denominations. Neither is such strife approved by the consecrated Christian laity. The folly of denominational competition that often results in the plurality of Protestant churches in villages and rural communities, which in point of numbers and finances are only sufficient to sustain one vigorous organization, must disappear before the rising tide of coöperation and church federation. And perhaps no body of men in America are more conscious of this need of coöperation and give to it a more hearty support than some of our denominational boards. They understand that strife by those who are seeking to do our Lord's work must cease : and, also, that the trained and consecrated missionary is as necessary to that end as is the trained pastor.

The people cannot long be deceived on these lines as to the Christian worker's real interest. They know when a man's heart is in his work

and the real cause for which he is laboring. Many men have failed even in a great mission field for the reason that they have prosecuted their labors in the name of their denomination instead of in the name of their Lord.

CHAPTER XX

THE PEOPLE'S ANSWER

HADEN WILSON'S rest in the mountains with the relief from all care soon brought marked improvement in his health. After the first week he realized that he was gathering strength each day. He was soon able to make excursions into the mountains and enjoy the beautiful scenery of the Ozarks.

During his stay at the Springs the missionary did not forget his friends back at Modoc; though he did not write long letters, yet he reminded a number there in short, helpful notes, that he was still interested in them. These letters greatly aided in keeping the people faithful to their recent professions of religion. They also served to contradict some of the statements of Dr. Cypert. That reverend gentleman learned in some way that a gift of one hundred dollars had been made to the missionary, and during one of the strongest presentations of his doctrine, he insinuated that the missionary with whom they had fallen in love would not be heard of again. "It is common for such char-

acters to labor a while, get all the money they can and go away never to return." This statement was contradicted by a number who heard it.

At the close of six weeks Haden Wilson was again strong and ready for a new campaign. He had learned from several sources of the great hindrances that were obstructing his work, and he knew from past experiences that this report was doubtless true. This made him all the more anxious to get back to Modoc. While at the Springs he wrote to his superintendent a full statement of the conditions in that section of the state and suggested that it would be a good plan for him to spend a part of his time there for several months in order to hold that field. His suggestions were approved and instructions were given for him to use his best judgment in prosecuting the work.

When Haden Wilson returned he found conditions somewhat changed. Two ministers had created a following. Some from each faction demanded that he should adopt their views and organize a church in harmony with them. The missionary understood that there was much work to be done to bring about the proper mind for such a step, but he gave the assurance that he would take up the matter within a reasonable time.

His first plan was again to unite the people, if such a thing could be done. That was hard, however, for the reason that Dr. Cypert returned at his appointed time and again proclaimed his denominational doctrine in the ears of the people. His following was determined. Something had to be done. So the missionary had it published abroad that he would have, on the Sunday following the doctor's great bombardment of all the denominations except his own, some definite proposition to submit to all the people relative to the organization of a church.

The occasion brought together a representative citizenship. Many of them felt that it would be to the credit of the community to have such an organization, yet they were jealous of such a movement. They remembered that for twenty-five years some of them had lived there, in all kinds of wickedness, and had been allowed to continue in their increasing sinfulness without a protest from any denomination. However, a large majority felt that they could trust the missionary and was willing to do so. The name of every man, woman and child, who had been converted and was willing to place themselves on the side of Jesus Christ, had been secured during the week; all had been spoken to personally by Haden Wilson.

That list contained sixty names. At least forty of them were adults past twenty years of age,—something remarkable. Ten were from the ranks of young people ranging from fourteen to twenty years of age, and only five were under fourteen years. The missionary knew that very few of the number were sufficiently informed as to the creeds of different churches clearly to understand why they would prefer one to another. This especially was the case before Dr. Cypert and the Rev. Mr. Camp undertook to indoctrinate them. Many of the people had grown up without any instruction or association that would lead them to a church preference. A few in their early days were to a degree under the influence of some particular denomination, and to those early impressions they were still loyal, although they were uninformed as to the articles of faith of the church of their childhood. But as a whole the people were broadly Christian, rather than denominational in their views.

In his opening discourse the missionary presented some reasons why they should have a permanent church organization: "First, it was God's plan by which the gospel is to be maintained in the world. It serves to bring all the people together with one purpose, to honor and worship the Creator. This association of

neighbors, together with acts of worship in song and prayer, followed by the earnest and faithful presentation of the gospel, is one foundation of our civil, political and religious institutions. From these associations and acts of worship there comes into the individual life a helpful power that is a strong stay in the day of adversity, and brings to us a higher appreciation of our duties as neighbors and citizens, and a greater devotion and love toward God for all his blessings.

“But the greatest results which come from this church life are its effect upon the children. It is a well known fact that where children grow up under the influence of Bible instruction in the Sunday-school and church, they make better citizens. Such communities furnish fewer drunkards, gamblers and murderers than those without the influence of these institutions. To illustrate this: I have secured a list, so far as I have been able to do so, of the number of drunkards, gamblers and of those who have committed murder during the past twenty years in your community. That list is appalling and is a far more powerful appeal to you than any I can make, to establish here in your midst those institutions from which emanate good fellowship, love and charity. During these twenty-five years your children have

grown up religiously uneducated, and I have been able to find only a few who have gone out into the world to occupy a prominent place in any of the spheres of human activity. With this record of crimes there is listed within these twenty-five years a sufficient catalogue of murdered innocence, wrecked homes and blighted hopes to move even demons to tears.

“But that day has passed for you. You are here at this hour to enter a decree for a brighter and better future. This hour is yours. On it hangs the highest destiny of your homes and your children, and as you face the obligations that it brings to you, let every loyal follower of Christ be willing to lay aside all personal preference, if that preference conflicts with the best interest of the whole.

“Why should you not unite in one church? You are neighbors. You patronize the same merchant, call in the same doctor to care for your sick; your sons and daughters marry. In the day of need you look to each other for mutual aid, and in the hour of distress and sorrow it is to your neighbor you turn for sympathy and comfort. When the death angel comes into your homes, claiming your loved ones, it is to the same common burying ground that you go.

“All do not agree in your understanding and estimate placed on your merchant and doctor;

not every one is pleased with the contracts of matrimony; your degrees of sympathy are as many as you have neighbors; neither do you agree as to your idea of burying your dead. While all this is true you do not refuse to buy goods from your merchant; neglect to call your doctor; repudiate matrimony, or deny sympathy to your neighbor.

“In all these relations, some of them holy, the individual is lost sight of in the interest of the whole. And since this is true, and also since you feel and believe a church is necessary for your best interest, can you not say that you will unite with your neighbor to secure its blessings as you have done and are doing in other matters?”

This argument brought the response that was desired. The missionary called names of professing Christians in the community, explaining first as he did so, if the person desiring to enter a church organization with his neighbors, the denomination to be determined by them, they were to stand as their names were called. Sixty names were called and fifty-five, all that were present, stood up.

Following this it was decided that a committee of five should be appointed from the body to make an investigation as to what denomination should be selected. To reach that end, a fair

and impartial consideration was to be given to at least four denominations—Baptist, Methodist, Christian, Presbyterian and possibly others. One matter that was emphasized for consideration was that of ascertaining the ability of different denominations to aid them in providing an acceptable pastor.

This step was highly pleasing to all. The missionary was asked to name the committee, which he did, with Mr. Holmes as chairman. The committee was to have one month in which to make its report, and was to be aided by the missionary in any way he could, and that the committee might suggest.

The following Sunday Dr. Cypert filled his appointment. He was indignant at what had been done and charged the missionary with a breach of Christian courtesy. He again made a strong appeal for the claims of his church. The committee heard his plea and informed the doctor that they would be glad to consider his claim and asked for all information to that end.

Other denominations were communicated with; also, a conference was held by the committee with the presiding elder of the Methodist church. All information that was available was secured relative to the Christian church. The Baptist could furnish a pastor once a month, with the understanding that

the people pay \$160 for the first year. The Presbyterians offered to furnish a man for full time, he to become a resident of the community, and pay one-half of the salary, \$400, if the people would pay the other half, and also provide for him a home. The presiding elder was in great need of available men and could only offer that, at the beginning of the next conference year, if a circuit could be created sufficient to insure from \$300 to \$450, he could probably send a man with an appropriation of \$150, the circuit to make provisions for the pastor's home. The best that could be done by the Christian church at the present was to send a man once a month, the expenses to be borne by the people.

All these offers were clearly stated at the meeting held for the purpose of hearing the report. The committee moved that they accept, so far as they could at that time, the offer of the Presbyterians, and asked that the proper man be sent to carry out all plans.

Clarence Bush, one of the committee, stated that while he was reared by Methodist parents he was willing to favor the motion, as he fully believed that it would be for the best interest of all. Others discussed the matter. Some were fearful of the obligation to pay \$400. But the vote settled it. At least eighty per cent.

of the sixty persons present voted for the report of the committee.

It was understood that the missionary was to remain in charge and fill an appointment once a month until the pastor could be agreed upon.

CHAPTER XXI

“TRULY THE HARVEST IS GREAT”

IT is now almost six months since Haden Wilson got off the freight train at the tank and rode with Mike Masters in his rickety old wagon drawn by his little old bony team to the store. It had been six months full of interest. When the work of the last meeting was finished he felt that a great load was removed from his shoulders. While he was a Methodist and was loyal to his church, yet he was not disappointed over the people's choice. His own church had many good men, yet the demands upon it for their services, and also for funds, were far too great for the supply. The same was true with the Baptist; for in that end of the state their money and men were both limited. Such was the case with other denominations.

Without detailing what happened during the next six months following the meeting, at which it was decided to organize a church, we will rush across a period of time and take a glance, briefly, at Modoc one year after Haden Wilson

drove up to the store in Mike's rickety old wagon.

The church organization has been perfected. A young and energetic pastor with his wife deeply interested in his work now has charge of the church. Already material is on the ground for a building to cost \$2,500. The Sunday-school has grown. Ed Crockett, loyal to his convictions, "Be sure you are right, then go ahead," is sure he is right in filling a place in the church and Sunday-school. Mike Masters, with his wife and children, drives to the little schoolhouse each Sunday morning. But his old rickety wagon and little old bony team have given place to a more comfortable vehicle and much better horses. The pinched, starved look on the faces of the children has disappeared and the little care-worn wife has changed her burdens for joy and peace. Mike is a new man—"clothed," as he says, "in his right mind." He says: "There's no doubt about the world being brought to Christ since I, the hardest sinner in forty-five states, have been saved from my sins. If we had one thousand missionaries like Haden Wilson this nation would be taken for Jesus Christ in this generation." Mike is a student of the Scriptures and frequently holds prayer-meeting services and makes short and impressive talks. Harry Keith

is still an infidel, but he is no longer able to intimidate his neighbors. "He is still a wolf," says Clarence Bush, "but the lambs are safe in the fold." Ethel Holmes is now a student in a college near Kansas City, where she is preparing to become a missionary, subject to appointment of the church. She is a beautiful young woman, and has not for one moment doubted that in the unfolding of her life it will be done in accordance with his will. With this vision ever before her she presses bravely on. Clarence Bush is now a student missionary. He has planned to spend four years in a theological school, but he is not at all sure that he will accept ordination from his church. The need of the missionary field in his own state appeals to him. Since his conversion, scores have been led by him to accept Christ. Haden Wilson is still a Sunday-school missionary, seeking to find the neglected places, and is giving his life in willing service to save the lost.

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